

Stop Worrying,

Relax...

Be Happy

(Renew your Life)

**by Shaikh Muhammad al-
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*An Islamic approach to the book
“How to Stop Worrying and Start Living”
by Dale Carnegie*

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Introduction by the Publisher

Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem

Allahever never changes a people's state until they change what is in themselves¹

There is often a strong desire within people to make a fresh start in their lives; however, they link this long awaited new beginning, with an unknown dream, such as an improvement in life conditions, or a change in status; they may also link it with a particular event, or a special occasion, such as an anniversary or new year. Along with this deferment, they feel that an amazing power would emerge on that particular date, instilling activity and hope in their dull and hopeless lives, but this is pure illusion.

The renewal of life springs, above all, from within the self; and anyone who faces the world with willpower and steadfastness, would never submit to the surrounding circumstances, no matter how bad they were; but rather benefit from them, remaining calm before them.

Like flower seeds covered by a pile of dirt, they emerge as flowering plants to meet the sunlight with their fresh fragrance. They have transformed the fetid mire into a pleasing view with fragrance.

¹ Surat Ar-Ra'd, verse 12.

A person should have the ability to renew his life, if he made use of his inner strength and potential, by taking advantage of the limited number of chances that he may encounter during his lifetime.

Imam Al-Bannaa was right when he said: "Happiness, which everyone is longing for, streams to them from their own minds and hearts, and likewise, the hardship surrounding them, and from which they try to escape, befalls them from their hearts as well.

"O mankind, do not build your life on hope in the unknown, as it would not do you any good".

Al-Firdous

Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem

Introduction

I would like to inform the people who are ignorant of Islam and its rulings of the foremost characteristic of this religion (Islam); that it is the religion of common sense!

All its different teachings, covering every aspect of life, encourage good behaviour and balanced mentality; its guidance which is established in its sources, is a relief to people in their search for perfection.

I have always longed to illustrate the similarity between the undisclosed Islamic heritage and the ideology of liberal thinkers, in most political, social and psychological areas. I have concluded, from those aspects that agree that there is evidence of true conformity between the revelation of the experimental world and the Divine Revelation!

It is true that a correct and identical answer could be given by two people whom were both asked the same question; likewise the logic of virtuous human nature leads to good deeds and conforms with Divine Revelation, guiding mankind to the Right Path.

My respect for Islam and my attachment to it are due to what I have experienced myself, in its response to one's Fitrah (true nature); for if it were not a religion coming from the All-Knower, of the unseen and the seen, I would

not, nor would anyone else, be able to invent a better religion, in establishing the correct relationship between Allah ﷻ and His people.

You may doubt this claim, and regard it as extremism from a passive man, yet it is my right to introduce you to a few comparisons, for you to examine and judge for yourself...

The word Fitrah can have many meanings; my nature may differ from yours, when judging the same issue; you may consider something as good which I may see as bad! So, are there any regulations that would prevent any serious, mutual contradiction?

The answer is that whenever the word Fitrah is mentioned, it could only mean sound Fitrah (nature); in fact, any defect that attains nature, for any reason, should not be attributed to it!

Take, for example, a newborn baby; one would expect it to be delivered, with all its body organs and responses in good order. However, if it should happen that it is born blind, due to a genetic deficiency in one of its parents, or subsequent damage in the womb, then this blindness should not be attributed to nature, which is seen to be balanced and complete. What is said about the animal kingdom can also be applied to the plant kingdom; for fruit is expected to be cultivated in a whole state, without any blemishes, coming from pests such as insects.

Any deformation, which opposes the greatness of Fitrah is seen as a deviation that ought to be extenuated, but not recognized or accepted...

The whole of human society should adopt this attitude; people with a balanced mentality and moderate temperament are the only ones whom we should consult or listen to. As for corrupted people, who have deviated desires and ideas, they are like the damaged fruit of the plant kingdom; they are not examples of integrity of Fitrah, so their judgments and opinions should not be taken into consideration.

When the Prophet ﷺ said concerning one who seeks piety: "Consult your heart", he ﷺ did not present this answer to a criminal, who ignores other people's rights, for there are numerous people whose minds dwell on major sins! But rather, he ﷺ conveyed this message to one who would even refrain from committing the smallest of sins, a man with a sound Fitrah and sense of good-will. The Prophet ﷺ wanted to spare him the efforts of asking, so he advised him to consult his heart, to find reassurance whenever he should feel confused or at a loss.

Men of this quality, with generous hearts, are the ones who establish a state of balance in this world; they are its guides.

When we look into the heritage of past generations from different civilizations, east or west, we may discover some people, having a sound Fitrah, who give precious advice and wisdom; they endeavour to reform the

deviated conditions, and reduce the spreading of mistakes and corrupted ideas.

Certainly, our life would be lost without these people! It would be more appropriate and worthy for the world to record those people, instead of writing about leaders and politicians who often oppress people around them. As for these people, of every nation, who have a sound Fitrah, we should try to benefit from them, while warning ourselves against those corrupted journalists and writers who spread immorality with their worldly values; indeed, there are an increasing number of those who encourage the removal of Taqwa and moral values from our lives, under the pretext that it is simply a return to one's own true nature, in conformity with one's Fitrah...!

The truth is that the role of this type of individual, among people, is like that of the "natural" germs which damage fruit, and cause illness to humans— i.e. they are a danger to one's true and sound nature!

If we have to explain the task of one's true nature, in recognising and defining the truth, then it is important that we shed light on another issue; the acquisition of knowledge of Divine Revelation, without benefiting from it oneself, or allowing others to benefit from it, because of one's defective Fitrah. What value is a pair of binoculars to a man who lost his sight? The loss of one's insight and awareness is like an obscure veil that prevents one understands of the truth! So, the ailment within religions came from the weakness of its followers who were not, initially, able to comprehend their messages;

this is similar to an injured fighter who would not be able to attack or retreat in the battlefield!

I have seen people with little knowledge of the heritage of the Prophets, and no record of any Divine Knowledge, yet the purity of their Fitrah was enough to guide them towards Allah ﷻ; to know their duties towards Him ﷻ, and how they should live mindfully of Him ﷻ.

It is true that these people did not perform their religious obligations, directly, as they were revealed, but their excuse is that they were not given a chance to perform them, because the Revelations of Allah were not exposed to them in an attractive manner for them to understand and accept! Yet, they could be in a better state than those who had a good knowledge of the Revelations of Allah ﷻ, but instead of being elevated to higher status, sunk with it through their disobedience.

History has recorded the downfall of many religious sects with their scholars. Some people even wanted to claim that those defeats were a misfortune surrounding the religion itself, which is quite unjust. For, the defeats possessed by these so-called religious people, is in fact a triumph of human nature, which rejects such stupidity, rigidity and hypocrisy.

This should act as an introduction to understanding the religion, as it was revealed by Allah ﷻ, by not refuting it, even after it has been superficially corrupted or distorted by a few individuals!

Religion provides a clear picture in which its precepts and our feelings towards them should all be in harmony; and this picture has one only form, where the "head" stands raised above the body and its the parts and senses all in their correct place. Only a man with a sound Fitrah has this picture of the religion established in his mind; while the one with a slow mental perception and corrupted values, would present the religion with the most distorted image.

This chaos, taking place in the interpretation of the religious texts, is but a method used to try to corrupt the originality of the text; an ailment that affected the previous religions, Christianity and Judaism.

Perhaps we might be unable to protect the religion from people with a corrupted nature, therefore, the only solution is for those who possess a sound Fitrah to come forward and perform their duty.

With this solution, two outstanding benefits would result:

First: good natured people would benefit from what Allah has legislated for His servants; for no matter what the level of the intellect might be, it would never be sufficient, without the Divine text, just as a person's intelligence would not be able to encompass all of the scientific theories and artistic knowledge that is available.

Second: the facts about the religion would only fully benefit those who are capable of understanding them in their pure (original) form. Indeed, acquiring religious knowledge requires wisdom, not provided to every

individual, so it should be approached by those who have special ability to comprehend it.

Islam is a religion whose discussion and interpretation are not monopolized by any particular group, apart from those who are qualified with respectable studies, along with intellectual and spiritual ability. Al-Azhar has approved that its magazine be managed by people of this kind, even if they are not among its official scholars!

Good perception of religious facts – as they were revealed – has to be coupled with the sincerity in implementing them. Solving other people's problems can only be done by a person who has already solved his or her own, supplemented by religious arguments, supported by facts.

One could say that there are some people who carry Islamic knowledge, who are not expert in their field. There are also people who could help others with their knowledge, yet not benefit from it themselves.

The Qur'an has strongly condemned this type of people; Allah ﷻ has said: **(The likeness of those who were entrusted with the obligation of the Torah, but who subsequently failed in those obligations, is as the likeness of a donkey who carries huge burdens of books (but understands nothing from them). How bad is the example (or the likeness) of people who deny the Signs (proof, evidence, revelation) of Allah. And Allah guides not the people who are polytheists**

(wrong-doers, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, His Messenger, His books, etc) ¹.

These days, the Human Rights paper which was drafted by the International Community has become a source of mockery and contempt, because those states which have signed for it, have ignored following its conclusions, altogether!

Man has the ability to comprehend the truth, with his Fitrah; for the Halal (lawful) things are clear, as are the Haram (unlawful) things.

However, this knowledge may be of little value if it is not used to forbid unlawful deeds, and legalise the lawful ones; so it is irrelevant if one does not wish to distinguish between virtue and immorality, or between justice and oppression.

Those so-called scholars, with no real knowledge, may try to show us the way to the truth, but not be able to take us to it; rather, the majority of facts, that they use, are restricted to a very narrow field of view. The problem lies in the fact that the ways of benevolence, and the adaptation to its method, can only be properly applied by those people who have educated themselves; as for those who just carry knowledge like a vehicle, they are simply far away from self-education and self-discipline. There are masses of people who are still far away from Islam; practically ignoring most of its teachings, without seeking its guidance and its light.

¹ Surah Al-Jumu'a, verse 5.

Islam is the Fitrah brought by the Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah ﷺ, to take people back to their pure state (of Fitrah), after they were driven away from it by corrupted minds.

Using this pure method, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ supported the cause of Musa (Moses) عليه السلام whom the Children of Israel disbelieved, and that of Isa (Jesus) عليه السلام upon whom the Christians committed Shirk (Polytheism), regarding his person and his message. The Prophet ﷺ supported every man who turned away from untrue and illusive stories, and decided to take the path of Allah ﷻ, with the clear Light of Iman (faith), while performing good deeds! In the Islamic world, there is a book about Fitrah to refer to, lessons to lecture about it and masses to appease! But in other countries, people are begging for its guidance; the way explorers search for gold in deserts; if they manage to find something, they raise its value for their own (great) advantage.

He is right he who said: "People are of two types: a person who sleeps during the light of day, and a one who wakes up in darkness of the night"!

The weakened condition of people's nature, in those countries that are deprived from the light of the Holy Qur'an, is widespread, and diverse in quality. It is not difficult, for anybody who possesses any degree of Islamic knowledge, to distinguish between a silent sign, and a spoken one; or a title which is separated from its subject, and a subject which has lost its title!

The intellectual backwardness of the Islamic countries is very alarming; while the high level of intellectual awareness of other countries is astonishing. We can only admit that this awareness is an echo of the Fitrah, the status of which has been raised by Islam. As for the backwardness of the Muslims, the main reason is due to their indifference about having a sound Fitrah, and reluctance to try to achieve this state.

This book presents a comparison between the teachings of Islam, as it was revealed to us, and the most truthful and purest achievement of the Western civilization, with regards to self conduct and discipline. The reader will observe the closeness, and even true conformity between them, which should prove to be very interesting.

Having read the book: "Stop Worrying and Start Living" by Dale Carnegie (translated into Arabic by Mr. Abdulmun'im Az-Ziyadi), I decided to compare it with Islamic sources!

It is not that the writer intended to say something about Islam; rather it is the conclusions that he drew, after considering the opinions of philosophers and educators, which agree, in many aspects, with some of the Verses of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ.

The author of the book does not seem to have knowledge about Islam, as if he had had, he would have used more evidence – than from other sources – to support all the facts he stated.

The sound Fitrah has been represented as advice in this book, after experiments and tests; its conclusions came as another view of the judgment of the Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah ﷺ, many centuries ago.

In this way, the results of experiment are in agreement with Divine Revelation, and so the reader will find out the extent to which this opinion is valid.

My plan, in this book, is to present Islam using two distinguished references: Firstly, from its sources (The Qur'an and the Sunnah) and secondly, from the reports, experiments and statements of the American scholar, Dale Carnegie.

I have intentionally made the scientific comparison a secondary issue; for I am above all a Muslim writer; I believe in this religion (Islam) from a proper study of its sources. I am aware that the world has a need to understand Islam without relying on causal statements, whether natural or artificial; furthermore, my lack of knowledge of foreign languages has restricted me to study only that which has been written down by the translators.

Nevertheless, those scientific statements might include some observations that relate to sound Fitrah, which deserve praise and commendation! But there is no place for comparison between the religion of Allah (Islam) and the effort of a particular individual or even a whole school. However, provided that this appreciated effort is regarded as an example of theories that were introduced previously by Islam, which state that the facts of life will

confirm their truth, as Allah ﷻ has said: **We will show them our Signs on the horizon and within themselves until it is clear to them that it is the truth** ¹.

I would like to point out to another issue, that I no longer possess the fanatic feelings of belonging to any particular race, though I find myself, recently, attracted to Arabism and its literature, because I felt that international policies intend, with their corrupted ways, to sacrifice the Arabs and their language to achieve its aims, using its followers and agents in the Middle East.

The reasons behind this vehement quarrel are clear; among its effects is the fact that some known writers – known for the institutions they work for – aim to separate us from our emotional and intellectual heritage; even by changing the characters (letters) of Arabic language. They came up with mediocre, tasteless literature, void of any real meaning.

For this reason, I have aspired to revive the primary source of Arabic wisdom, and entertain my readers with examples, in the context of the religious and scientific knowledge they meet in that book.

If “Dale Carnegie” relates the events to his readers in a pure American style, then it is my duty to relay the essence to my readers in a pure Arabic way, and deviate from it only when introducing some other human comparisons, which usually have no relation to any particular race.

¹ Surat Fussilat, Verse 53.

The last point is that the removal of social problems and mysteries, prevailing in many Arab states is a fundamental duty, which I cannot ignore by restricting myself to specialized research; so no one should be surprised to see me tackling personal or ethical problems, or relating any events about myself.

I am not writing to satisfy a logical enquiry, as much as to reform many widespread misconduct, and oppressive conditions.

My Lord give me right judgment, and unite me with the pious people; and make me highly esteemed with the later peoples; and make me one of the inheritors of the Garden of the Delight ¹.

Muhammad Al-Ghazali

¹ Surat As-Shu'ara', verse 83-85.

Renew Your Life...!

There is often a strong desire within people to make a fresh start in their lives; however, they link this long awaited new beginning, with an unknown dream, such as an improvement in life conditions, or a change in status; they may also link it with a particular event, or a special occasion, such as an anniversary or new year. Along with this deferment, they feel that an amazing power would emerge on that particular date, instilling activity and hope in their dull and hopeless lives, but this is pure illusion.

The renewal of life springs, above all, from within the self; and anyone who faces the world with willpower and steadfastness, would never submit to the surrounding circumstances, no matter how bad they were; but rather benefit from them, remaining calm before them.

Like flower seeds covered by a pile of dirt, they emerge as flowering plants to meet the sunlight with their fresh fragrance. They have transformed the fetid mire into a pleasing view with fragrance.

A person should have the ability to renew his life, if he made use of his inner strength and potential, by taking advantage of the limited number of chances that he may encounter during his lifetime.

Imam Al-Bannaa was right when he said: "Happiness, which everyone is longing for, streams to them from their

own minds and hearts, and likewise, the hardship surrounding them, and from which they try to escape, befalls them from their hearts as well.

"O mankind, do not build your life on hope in the unknown, as it would not do you any good".

If your near future is presented before you, you would see yourself with all the good or bad circumstances around you; by which your future is defined. So there is no room for hesitation or waiting; the Prophet ﷺ has said: "Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, stretches out His Hand during the night so that the people repent for the fault committed from dawn till dusk and He stretches out His Hand during the day so that the people may repent for the fault committed from dusk to dawn (He would accept repentance) before the sun rises in the west (before the Day of Resurrection)"¹.

Any delay in starting to renew your life, and improve your work, would simply mean extending the bleak period, which you had intended to leave behind, and leaving you defeated by your own desires and negligence; it could easily be a way of serious disintegration, which is the feared calamity. In this context, the Prophet ﷺ has said: "The repentant person waits for the Mercy of Allah, but the conceited one expects to avoid it. O servant of Allah, you should know that everyone will come to see his deeds, and will not leave this world until he sees the good and the bad of his deeds; and the emphasis is on the deeds with which the individual concluded his life". "The night and day are expedient in your life, so approach them carefully, with respect for the Hereafter". "And avoid delaying (your repentance), for death comes

¹ Transmitted by Muslim.

as a surprise". "None of you should be deluded with (and rely solely on) the clemency of Allah; for Paradise and Hell are nearer to him than his shoelace" then he ﷺ recited the verse: **He who does an atom weight of good will see it, and he who does an atom weight of evil will see it** ¹.

It is good to see mankind reorganizing himself, establishing its long and short term policies to avoid some of the calamities affecting society. Every so often, I look at every corner of my office to remove scattered papers and old notes. Then I have to organize each section; putting everything in order, and disposing of any useless items. A similar effort is done, on a daily basis, in cleaning the dusty furniture in the house after a long day's work, to keep it as tidy as possible.

But the moral state of Man deserves more respect; people deserve to be checked over to remove any of their disorders or sins.

Mankind should consider his inner being, safeguarding his private and public life from any form of disintegration: This is because his emotional and intellectual nature are largely incompatible, due to direct contact with (all aspects of) desires and temptations. Therefore, if left, exposed to these agents of destruction, so his emotional and intellectual state would deteriorate... as one **...whose heart we have made heedless of Our Remembrance, one who follows his own lusts and whose affair (deeds) has been neglected and lost** ².

¹ Surat Az-Zalzalah, verse 7-8.

² Surat Al-Kahf, verse 28.

We need to contemplate the last two words in the Verse above; commonly the Arabic (farata) term could be equivalent to some grapes dropped on the ground; they would be useless if they were to become separated from the bunch (their sources), and left to decay.

So, when the human self breaks from the (very) system that conducts its affairs and strengthens its power; its feelings and thoughts would become like dropped seeds. Thus, the necessity to continue to reorganize the self and establish a control over it; just as Allah ﷻ advises mankind – at dawn– to renew their lives daily.

When someone has slept well after a tiring day, and arisen from their bed to face a new day, at this particular moment, one could ask oneself: How many setbacks one suffered during the course of his life. How influenced one is by corrupt people. How many sins one has committed. How far one's state of confusion has left one in need of love and affection? At this particular moment, every person has the ability to renew his or her life, and can rebuild it in the light of hope, success and awareness.

The voice of the Truth calls out everywhere, for right guidance from those who wish to repent; the Prophet ﷺ has said: "During the last third of the night, our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, descends every night to the sky saying: 'Is there anyone who would invoke Me (demand anything from Me), that I may respond to his invocation. Is there anyone who would ask Me for something that I may give (it to) him. Is there anyone who would ask My forgiveness that I may forgive him?' until dawn"¹. And in another narration: "Allah is nearest to His servant in the midst of the later part of the night; thus if you are able

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Abu Hurairah ؓ.

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¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Abu Hurairah ؓ.

to be amongst those who remember Allah at that hour, do so"¹.

This is a new dawn; so one is able to rise and build one's future upon the remains of the near or distant past. Do not hesitate because of the numerous sins committed, for even if they were as large as all the foam of the sea, Allah ﷻ would forgive them all, if one sincerely turns towards Him ﷻ. One's past ingratitude should not be a hindrance to one's truthful return to Allah ﷻ, Who has said:

Say: My slaves, who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins), do not despair of the Mercy of Allah, verily Allah forgives all sins. Truly, He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. And turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith to your Lord and submit to Him

².

And in the Hadith Qudsi³, Allah ﷻ said: "Allah, the Exalted, has said:

*'O son of Adam! Certainly, I shall continue to pardon you so long as you supplicate to Me and hope for My Forgiveness, whatever your faults and sins may be, I do not mind. O son of Adam, even if your sins pile up as high as the sky, and you ask for My forgiveness, I will forgive you. O son of Adam, if you came to Me with an earthful of faults and met Me, not associating anything with Me, I will come to thee, with an earthful of forgiveness.'*⁴

¹ Transmitted by Attirmidhi, on the authority of Amr bin Abasah ﷺ.

² Surat Az-Zumur, verse 53-54.

³ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari.

⁴ Transmitted by Attirmidhi, on the authority of Anas bin Malik ﷺ.

These types of Ahadith instil hope, after despair and lack of will; they provide the individual with the determination he was lacking to adopt the path of Allah ﷻ, and renew his life, after having had a deviated and corrupted past. It is hard to understand why people are not rushing to their Lord, with wings of craving, rather than led to Him ﷻ by fear?

People's ignorance of Allah and His Deen are the real cause of this hard feeling, even though, people will not find anyone more merciful to them than He is ﷻ. His Mercy and Compassion are not associated with a particular aim; but rather they represent the mark of His Perfection and Infallibility.

In the story of mankind, we learn that Allah ﷻ honour him, from his creation, and did not disgrace him; He ﷻ said:

*And surely, We gave you authority on the earth and appointed for you provisions (for your life) therein. Little thanks do you give. And surely, We created you and then gave you shape (the noble shape of a human being), then We told the angels: 'Prostrate to Adam'...*¹.

The function of religion is to provide ways and relations based on truth and equality, enabling people to live in this world without oppression, nor ignorance; it fulfils their existence with joy.

According to His Shari'ah, Allah ﷻ is on the side of parents against the disobedience of their children; with

¹ Surat Al-A'raf, verse 10-11.

the oppressed against the authority of the oppressor; and with the safety of any individual, in terms of his honour, property and blood!

Allah ﷻ has ordered the sons of Adam to perform certain religious rituals so as to thank Him for His Blessings and to remember His Rights over them. These obligatory acts of worship are not too painful for people to perform. The truth is that Allah ﷻ only requires from mankind their generosity and dignity, yet people refuse to respond to Him ﷻ and to take the path set for them; so they became victims of their own desires. Despite this deviation, which they willingly embrace, those calling to Iman (Faith) invite them to return to their Creator for salvation.

One can not describe the joy that Allah ﷻ has for your return to Him; the Prophet ﷺ said:

*"Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His servant than anyone of you is pleased when finding a camel which he had lost in the desert."*¹

Are you not amazed with this merciful statement? Do you see any delight greater than this?

Even the most noble people rarely encounter anyone so eager to meet them with such affection and desire. So what about a sinner who has transgressed against himself or another? If he should find such a welcome, to cover up his past, then that security would relieve him so he would be grateful.

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Anas bin Malik ﷺ.

Allah ﷻ is more kind and beneficent to people, and even more delighted over their return (to Him) than they could ever believe!

It is natural that this return should be a complete transition from one lifestyle to another, like the coming of dawn.

This is not a casual return that an individual undertakes and just to return to his or her chaotic life; it is a successful return that Allah ﷻ is pleased with. It is the victory of Man over his weaknesses and laziness; his freedom from the chains of his own desires, settling himself down to a new phase of Iman (faith), beneficence, maturity and right guidance. About this return, Allah ﷻ has said:

*﴿But, I am Ever-Forgiving to anyone who repents, has Iman, acts rightly and then is guided﴾*¹.

It is a life that has been renewed after its decay; a decisive move, which changes the characteristics of the self, the way farmland can change after receiving plenty of water and fertilizer.

The renewal of life does not mean introducing a few good deeds, or intentions amidst several reprehensible habits or bad morals. This mixture will not enable an individual to establish a good, praiseworthy future. Allah ﷻ has described some of those who are banned from His Grace:

¹ Surat Ta Ha, verse 82.

«Have you seen him who turns away and gives little, and that grudgingly?»¹

He ﷺ also said about those who try to disprove His Book:

«It is not the word of a poet – how little Iman you have! Nor the word of a fortune-teller – what little heed you pay! It is revelation from the Lord of all the worlds»².

Sometimes the minds of the bad people experience a little awakening, then they return to their lethargy; yet it cannot be considered as right guidance, since right guidance is the last phase of sincere repentance!

Being distant from Allah ﷻ, will only cause bitterness and torment; all the faculties of power and intelligence, beauty and knowledge turn into misfortune and calamity, when they are deprived of the blessings of Allah ﷻ. For this reason, He ﷻ warns people against their being estranged or distracted from Him ﷻ.

You may be subject to an incident while walking; you may be surprised by a speeding car threatening your life; so you could find yourself running for your life. But Allah ﷻ wants His servants to know that they are likely to be exposed to such life threatening incidents, so He ﷻ advised them to seek safety by fleeing to Him:

«So flee to Allah. Truly I bring you a clear warning from Him. Do not set up another god

¹ Surat An-Najm, verse 33-34.

² Surat Al-Haaqah, verse 41-44.

with Allah. Truly I bring you a clear warning from Him»¹.

This is a return that requires that Man should renew his life, re-organize it, proceeding with a better relationship with his Lord, by making a pledge with this Du'a (supplication):

“O Allah, You are my Lord, and there is no god but You. You created me and I am Your servant. I am bound by my pledge to You and Your Promise to my ability. I seek refuge in You against the evil deeds I have committed. Forgive me, for none can forgive the sins but You”².

¹ Surat Adh-Dhariyat, verse 50-51.

² Transmitted by Al-Bukhari.

Living According to One's Daily Commitments

One of the deficiencies of Man is the fact that his present is weighed down by future burdens.

When an individual becomes too hopeful in his life, his thinking wonders in an uncontrolled manner, which makes it easier for quick temptations and illusions to block the way leading to a state of constant worry.

Why do you feel overwhelmed by worry and suspicion? Try to live within your daily commitments, and "have no anxiety about the morrow"; it is better for and more beneficial to you.

Dale Carnegie introduced a number of experiments for successful individuals; men who were not mentally attached to their future hopes. Instead, they were fully committed to their present, facing its demands and solving its problems. They had adopted this attitude in their everyday life, and so concluded their experiments with the words: "Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand"¹ (an advice from the English writer, Thomas Carlyle).

Dr. Osler suggested to his students, at Yale University, to start their day by offering the prayer of 'Isa (Jesus) ﷺ: "Give us this day our daily bread". Remember that this

¹ "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living" (p.23), by Dale Carnegie.

prayer asks only for today's bread. It does not complain about the stale bread we ate yesterday; and it does not say: "O God, it has been pretty dry out in the wheat belt, lately, and we may have another drought – so how will I get bread to eat next fall – or suppose I lose my job – O God, how could I get bread then?" No, this prayer teaches us to ask for today's bread only. Today's bread is the only kind of bread you can possibly eat."¹

Living within the day's limits, according to this advice, is related to the saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

*"He who spends the day in safety of his life, in good physical condition (good health) and with one day's provision of edible food, is like one upon whom the world and all it contains, has been bestowed"*².

You own the whole world once you have all these, so do not despise them!

Safety, good health and self-sufficiency for one day are the elements that allow a reasonable mind to think calmly, in a manner that may change the whole course of history, let alone the life of one individual.

These attainable blessings are great guaranties to Man that enable him to have a fully productive time, free from psychological predicaments or physical obstacles. Truly, it is foolish to expect hardships to happen before their time. Such expectations are usually generated by illusion and pessimism. Man should start his day as if it were completely independent from its environment (time and

¹ Ibid, p.23-24.

² Transmitted by Attirmidhi, on the authority of 'Ubaydullah bin Muhsin Al-Ansari Al-Khatmi.

place). Ibraheem (Abraham) ﷺ used to begin his day with a supplication to Allah, at dawn: "O Allah, this a new day, help me start it in obedience to You, and help me end it receiving Your Mercy and Pleasure. Grant me a Hasanah (good deed) that you accept; purify it and multiply it for me, and forgive any sin I have committed; You are Forgiving, Merciful, Loving and Generous"¹, and he ﷺ used to say: "He who makes such prayer in the morning, he has indeed thanked his Lord that day".

The Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ draws our attention to the truthfulness of this method of separating different aspects of life, and then approaching each one of them with a composed mind and strong will. In the morning, he ﷺ used to say:

*"We start our morning, knowing the dominion belongs to Allah and praise is for Allah; He has no partner, for there is no god but Him, and to Him is our final destination"*²,

and in the evening, he said similarly.

Some people take for granted the blessings bestowed upon one by Allah ﷻ, such as safety and peace of mind, within oneself or one's family; they disregard these great blessings, and complain about being unlucky, or not having enough wealth and power. This contempt is a sign of neglect of the real world, which is harmful to both one's faith and life.

It was narrated that a man asked Abdullah bin Al-'As ﷺ:

¹ "Al-Ihya".

² Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

*"Am I not among the destitute of the Emigrants?" Abdullah said to him: "Have you a spouse with whom you live?" he said: "Yes", he ﷺ asked him again: "Do you have a house to live in?" he said replied: "Yes", so he said to him: "Then you are among the rich". The man added: "I have a servant also", thereupon, Abdullah ﷺ said: "Then you are among the kings"*¹.

Self-sufficiency and the good use of what is in one's possession, without relying on hope, is the essence of the greatness of the self, and the secret of overcoming difficult circumstances.

People who do not suffer losses – because they were granted plenty of wealth – rarely benefit from their possessions if they lack the willpower to exploit the situation, and so benefit from their surroundings. This is a fact, confirmed by the Prophet ﷺ at the beginning of every morning: "Whenever the sun rises, two angels are sent on its sides; they address the people on earth: 'O people, come to your Lord; for what is little and sufficient is better than what is plentiful and distracting', and at sunset, the two angels ask the Lord: 'O Allah, Compensate every person who spends in Your Cause, and destroy every miser'"².

The end of this Hadith is a promise of compensation for generous people, and a threat of punishment for the miser. Yet, its beginning is a comparison, regarded as a preference for little over large quantities. But really, it is

¹ Transmitted by Muslim.

² Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Abu Hurairah ﷺ.

a preference for a small but sufficient amount over an unnecessary and distracting abundance.

As for an abundance, which enriches the person, where much still remains and could be used to help settle the needs and rights of others; therefore this is a better position to be in than having limited resources. The present Hadith does not refer to it; however it urges the faithful to be generous, without fearing poverty; this type of approach to life, helps Muslims develop considerable courage.

This is a quote from Abu Hazim, regarding this issue: "The difference between me and the kings is one day... as for yesterday, they do not enjoy it anymore! And they and I are both worried about tomorrow! So it is all about today, what would it be like today?"

This pious destitute defied the kings; indeed, the pleasures of the past disappear, with yesterday; nobody can keep hold of them... As for the morrow, both masters and servants share one similarity, in anticipating it, therefore, life is all about today, where mindful people live within its limits. The one who controls himself and is aware of his purpose in life, is the one who becomes a king to himself...

Nevertheless, living one day at a time does not mean forgetting the future, nor neglecting preparation for it. By all means take thought for the tomorrow, yes, careful thought, planning and preparation. But do not be so anxious.

There is a big difference between thinking of the future, and being anxious about it; between preparing for it, and becoming too concerned about it; between the trying to exploit the most from the present day, and confused apprehension about the outcome of the morrow.

When Islam warns against spending too freely and extravagance, and calls for economy, it ensures the future of Man, by saving from times of good health, for times of illness; from his youth for his old age, and from times of peace for times of war. Sufyan Ath-Thawri (one of the great figures of the Tabi'in (Followers coming after the time of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ)) used to point to his great wealth and say: "If it were not for this, Banu Umayyah would have made us their servants!" i.e. his richness protected them from the rulers of his time, so he did not need to flatter them.

In reality, this is an approach that helps to achieve beneficence in life, within a day; for when the present is under control, that is a good basis for a successful future, so there should be no room for anxiety.

Dale Carnegie wrote: "One of the most tragic things I know about human nature is that all of us tend to put off living. We are all dreaming of some magical rose garden over the horizon – instead of enjoying the roses that are blooming outside our windows today".

"How strange it is, our little possession of life!" wrote Stephen Leacock. "A child says: 'When I am a big boy!' But what really? A big boy says: 'When I grow up!' And then, when grown up, he says: 'When I get married!' But

to be married, what is that, after all? The thought changes to, 'When I am able to retire.' And then, when retirement comes, he looks back over the journey traversed; a cold wind seems to sweep over it; somehow he has missed it all, and it is gone. Life, we learn too late, is for living, in the passing of every day and hour."¹

About those who have wasted their lives, and let the days slip away through their hands, Allah ﷻ has said:

On the Day the Last Hour arrives, the evildoers will swear that they stayed not but an hour ²

and He ﷻ also said:

On the Day they see it, it will be as if they had only lingered for an evening or a morning of a single day ³.

¹ From "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living" p.25 (Dale Carnegie).

² Surat Ar-Rum, verse 55.

³ Surat An-Nazi'at, verse 46.

Firmness, Lassitude and Deception

If you were overwhelmed by a calamity that was threatening your life, what would you do?

Would you let fear take over, and let the violent storms (of life) carry you to a remote place?

Or you would stand composed and assured, trying to find, in the middle of these misfortunes, a secure path, having been guided by correct thinking?

Dale Carnegie has said:

1. Ask yourself: "What is the worst that can possibly happen?"
2. Prepare to accept it if you have to.
3. Then calmly proceed to improve on the worst.

This plan is compatible with both religion and intellect. In the Arabic literature, there are many examples of men's courage, in facing the misfortunes, and their keenness to overcome them without violating (anything of) their honour.

Willis Carrier has said: "There is no doubt that a man who controls his nerves in times of crises, looking around himself with insight, is the one who succeeds and is rewarded in the end.

Losing your senses, or running away, when faced with a crisis, will not benefit you at all; because that would not

delay a predestined event from occurring. The Prophet ﷺ said:

*"Real patience is (to be found) at the onset of a calamity"*¹.

Man could expect some terrible calamities, and feel anxious anticipating them, as if waiting for death; this constant worry could even cause him lose his appetite, and wipe the smile off his face. In fact, people can often remain poor out of fear of being disgraced, or humbled!

This is a grave mistake; for the rightly guided Muslim would assume that the worst that could befall him has already taken place, then take any remaining option left for him i.e. some factors that would be enough for his life and consolation.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

*"The example of a believer is like that of a fresh tender plant; from whatever direction the wind comes, it bends it, but when the wind dies down, it becomes straight again. Similarly, a believer is afflicted with calamities (but remains patient till Allah removes his difficulties.) But an impious wicked person is like a pine tree which remains hard and straight, till Allah cuts (breaks) it down whenever He wishes."*²

He ﷺ also said that the Muslims would be afflicted with some calamities, but not what he had to endure; indeed, his life was an irreplaceable blessing to them (the

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Anas ﷺ.

² Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Abu Hurairah ﷺ.

Companions and all the Muslims afterwards), until he ﷺ passed away.

Man usually dreads losing anything he is too fond of, or having to face any oppressive affliction; yet both happenings, after they have taken place, are received without much great distress.

Dale Carnegie has related to us: "Professor William James, the father of applied psychology, said to his own students: 'Be willing to have it so... Be willing to have it so', because '... acceptance of what has happened is the first step in overcoming the consequences of any misfortune'. The same idea was expressed by Lin Yutang in his widely read book, *The Importance of Living*. 'True peace of mind,' said the Chinese philosopher, 'comes from accepting the worst. Psychologically, I think, it means a release of energy.' It makes sense, doesn't it? Yet millions of people have wrecked their lives in angry turmoil, because they refused to accept the worst; refused to try to improve upon it; refused to salvage what they could from the wreck. Instead of trying to reconstruct their fortunes, they engaged in a bitter and 'violent contest with experience' – and ended up victims of that brooding fixation, known as melancholia'."¹

In Islam, regret and strenuous mourning over physical defeats or a failed past are aspects of disbelief in Allah ﷻ, and resentment of His Fate and Divine Destiny. In the context of Iman (faith), it is necessary to forget about all these afflictions, and proceed with life, with less hope

¹ "How To Stop Worrying and Start Living" p.35.

and expectation, but more work and determination; Allah has said:

*You who believe, do not be like those who disbelieve (hypocrites) and say to their brethren, when they travel through the earth or go out to fight: 'If they had stayed with us, they would not have died or be killed', so that Allah may make a cause of regret in their hearts. It is Allah that gives life and causes death. And Allah is All-Seer of what you do*¹.

The first sign of complete freedom is exemplified in a man who does not resort to begging or imploring, in times of need. In fact, when a man becomes a slave to desires he lacks, it is considered a defect in his manhood, which could result in an irreparable loss in his Iman (faith).

True Iman makes man resistant and unyielding; he does not bend with the passing of the wind. As for one who indulges in the desires of life, whether heavily or mildly, he or she would not care about any of the troubles in his life; he would probably quote Mru'u Al-Qais: "Today (we have) wine and tomorrow (we will deal with) matters"!

There are some people who enjoy sneering at anyone, but if they were targeted by events, it would hurt them the way a stray bullet could hurt a careless man. But such cases should not be considered as examples to follow even in times of hardship. In fact, the level of sensitivity

¹ Surat Al-'Imran, verse 156.

to pain differs greatly among people, but when one gets absorbed in a situation, be it good or bad, one's pains are soothed. Therefore, people who seek perfection, with a sense of honour, have to maintain their high values, and remain relaxed.

Dale Carnegie related a story about a man who was suffering from a stomach ulcer, to such an extent that his doctors had determined the time of his death, and advised him to prepare for his funeral, he said: "All of a sudden, Earl P. Haney (the sick person) took a final decision, he said to himself: "Look here, Earl Haney, if you have nothing to look forward to except a lingering death, you might as well make the most of the little time you have left. You have always wanted to travel the world before you die; so if you are ever going to do it, you will have to do it now." When he bought a travel ticket, his doctors were extremely worried about him, and warned him that if he went ahead with his idea, he could be buried at sea. "No, I won't" he replied, "I have promised my relatives that I will be buried in the family plot at Broken Bow, Nebraska". So he set out on his trip, imbued with the spirit of Omar Al-Khayam:

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the dust descend;
Dust unto dust, and under dust, to lie,
Without Wine, without blood, without copying, and –
without end!

The man started his trip, full of entertainment, and sent a letter to his wife saying: "I gradually gave up my alkaline powders and my stomach pump. I smoked cigars, and

was soon eating all kinds of feeds – even strange native mixtures and concoctions that were guaranteed to kill me. I enjoyed myself more than I had done in years! I have never felt better in my life. I went back to business and have not been ill, a day, since.” The man was certain that his hour had come, yet he was not frightened of death”.

We do not deny the effect of the mental entertainment in overcoming difficulties, and we recognize the fact that strong mental powers help defeat most of the impediments in life. Nevertheless, we also draw the attention to the serious mistake of believing that death is not a reality, and using the verses of Al-Khayam as an incentive to indulge in all kinds of desires, before the end of one's life.

This misjudgement is generally accepted throughout the world; but the truth is that people of all religions should understand that death is only a transition followed by a deeper, more lasting life. Indeed, our present life should only be regarded as amusement and play; Allah ﷻ has said: **And this life of the world is only amusement and play! Verily, the home of the Hereafter, – that is life, indeed (i.e. the eternal life that will never end), if they but knew.**¹

The notion that death is the beginning of a state of non-existence is itself an illusion, spread out by many people; it is this materialistic attitude that influences individuals to commit suicide, giving up the will to live in this world.

¹ Surat Al-'Ankabut, verse 64.

They are tortured by this inclination, and being overwhelmed by anxiety; so what else apart from death could relieve them from that relentless feeling?

But what if they should learn the truth, and realize that their souls, which they intended to give up, have not changed much, apart from the feeling of fear which they endured for a certain time, then they could free themselves from this, without losing their consciousness.

After death, there is another period of the human existence, characterized by an increased level of awareness or consciousness.

It was said that Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali asked his some of his companions to provide him with new clothing, when his end drew near!

They said to him: “What do you want it for?”

He replied: “To meet the King wearing it!”

They gave him the new clothing; so he went to his room, but did not return. His companions went to check on him, and found him dead. He had left a note, by his head, containing some poetic verses which – whether they belong to Abu Hamid or not – represent a more religious interpretation of life after death.

I have read an article by a *materialistic* writer, describing the dying moments of a cricket, assuming that the whole future of mankind would have similar worthless end – i.e. it would end in the same way, being totally forgotten about, in the state of non-existence.

As for the verses of Al-Khayam, which depict a dead person as merely a corpse, with dust (soil) both

underneath and on top of it, having nothing to look forward to, is but a mixture of irrelevant words. So, anyone who builds his own life upon such claim is indeed living in illusion.

One might enjoy life to a great extent, and experience life fully, yet we should not be deceived by this deceptive image.

The right approach is to adopt the Deen of Allah ﷻ, alone, as our source of mental and inspiration.

The reality is that fear, cowardice and remorse – and various other sentiments – which overwhelm people with regards to death, are due to their belief that death is a change from existence to non-existence, from light into darkness, and from sociability to isolation.

Do these people know that this life, with all its blessings, will be a set of impressive recollections, and that one day pious people will meet and say to each other:

*Foretime, we were afraid with our families from the punishment of Allah. But Allah has been gracious to us, and has saved us from the torment of the Fire. Verily, we used to invoke Him before. Verily, He is the Most Generous, the Most Merciful*¹.

As for their speech about the atheists; they say:

Then they will turn to one another, mutually questioning. A speaker of them will say: "Verily, I

¹ Surat At-Tur, verse 26-28.

*had a companion (in the world), who used to say: "Are you among those who believe in resurrection after death; that when we die and become dust and bones, shall we indeed be raised up to receive reward or punishment (according to our deeds)". (The man) said: "Will you look down?" so he looked down and saw him in the midst of the Fire. He said (to him): "By Allah, you were nearly ruined."*¹.

¹ Surat As-Saffat, verses 50-56.

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Worries and Venoms

The experts of the western world often complain about the bitter competition to have and gain ever-increasing amount of wealth; both groups and individuals compete to obtain the maximum amount of riches possible. Their mental and physical faculties are occupied with this, so they put all their efforts to achieve more wealth.

Machines require oil to lubricate their moving parts, and prevent any sparks from being produced out of friction; as for people's ability to struggle to obtain wealth, they usually lack sufficient sedativeness, and so proceed with anxiety until they suffer mental breakdowns.

Dale Carnegie wrote, describing scenes of this materialistic voracity, and the afflictions it left in the bodies and souls of people: "Now, I had lived in New York for many, many years; and no one had ever yet rung my doorbell to warn me against the emotional sickness of worry – an illness that, during the same time period, had caused ten thousand times more damage than smallpox. No doorbell ringer has ever warned me that one person out of ten, now living in these United States, will have a nervous breakdown – induced, in the vast majority of cases, by worry and emotional conflicts!"¹

Doctors estimate that one in every twenty Americans would spend some time of their lives in mental clinics. Among the bitter truths, is the fact that one in six young

¹ "How To Stop Worrying and Start Living" p.40

Americans, who requested to join the army during the last World War, were rejected, because they suffered from physical or mental illness; Dr. Harold C. Habein of the Mayo clinic said that he had made a study of 176 business executives, whose average age was 44.3 years. He reported that slightly more than a third of these executives suffered from one of three ailments, peculiar to high-tension living – heart disease, digestive-tract ulcers, and high blood pressure. Think of it – a third of our business executives are wrecking their bodies with heart disease, ulcers, and high blood pressure, before they even reach forty-five. What a price for success! And they are not even buying success! Can any man possibly be a success who is paying for his business advancement, with stomach ulcers and heart trouble? What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world – and loses his health? Even if he owned the whole world, he could sleep in only one bed, at a time, and eat only three times a day. Even a new employee can do that – and probably sleep more soundly and enjoy his food more than a high-powered executive. Frankly, I would rather be a carefree person, with no responsibility, than wreck my health at forty-five"¹.

Dr. W. C. Alvarez remarked: "It was clear that four out of five patients had no physical basis whatever for their stomach illnesses. They suffered from fear, worry, hate, supreme selfishness, and the inability to adjust themselves to the world of reality."

¹ "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living" p.41.

In light of these sad claims, we would like to refer to some Ahadith (traditions) of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, who said:

"He who focuses on just one worry (i.e. of the Hereafter) Allah ﷻ will protect him from the worries of this world; but he who only worries about himself, Allah would not care in which worldly situation he should perish"¹.

This type of prophetic guidance is intended to establish serenity in people's hearts, the removal of all aspects of greed, which would increase people's problems, as they chase after the pleasures of this world, regretting if they should miss any of it; the Prophet ﷺ said:

"If anyone's intention is to seek the hereafter Allah will place his sufficiency in his heart and order his affairs, and the world will approach him submissively; but if anyone's intention is only to seek worldly benefits, Allah will place poverty before him and disorder in his affairs, but only as much of it as has been ordained for him will (actually) come to him"².

There are many other traditions about this subject, which represent far-reaching wisdom, if it is used in the right context; it tends to slow down the mad "rat race", in the struggle for survival, and restrain the feelings of people, as they try to keep up with the demands of life. However, some ascetic people have misinterpreted earlier traditions, and wrongly used them to avoid the activities of life, instead of purifying them; so they have abandoned both religion and the life in this world...

¹ Transmitted by Al-Hakim.

² Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

The world demands that we should be active in it, to enjoy its necessities and pleasures, for the preservation and fulfilment of our life; this activity could require much effort from us, yet we should not let this lead us away from the Right Path.

We should seek wealth to spend it on ourselves and others, not hoard it; so if we acquire any money, we should use it to achieve well being, safeguarding our lives. But, it is of utter madness to let wealth (money, property) become a goal in itself, disregarding one's health, attracting all sorts of illnesses, and intensifying one's worries!

In Islam, there are good teachings for Man, with regards to his worldly life; targeting the heart to instil chastity and contentment.

The passion for acquiring money has a voracity that harms both mind and body; it brings shame and disgrace upon the person, and the strong love for it will turn into deep worry, if it is lost... Dale Carnegie said: "Among the known facts, that of the value of the share when it goes down, the percentage of urine and blood sugar increases among the share holders!"

There is no cure for this situation better than the saying of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ:

"Property is attractive, so he who acquires it in a proper way will be blessed by it. But he who acquires such property just as he likes, will have no blessing in it, and would be like the one who eats without any satisfaction"¹.

¹ Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

Property is like tasty, beautifully coloured fruit; it is natural that people should be inclined to acquire it, yet each person deals with it differently: Some may acquire it in excess, until they tire themselves out; others may steal property from other people, adding it to their share; some may just acquire it, but live in misery; and others may just be constantly worried, wanting ever more. The best people are those who seek property with dignity, yet should they fail to acquire any, show no remorse.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "O people, richness is by the increase in wealth; but it is really from the sufficiency of the self. Allah ﷻ gives His servant what is decreed for him; so look up your needs, take what is Halal (legal), and leave what is Haram (illegal)"¹.

The best desire is to earn what is Halal, with generosity and kindness, and reject what is Haram, out of moderation; then come the other teachings of Islam based on the belief in Allah ﷻ, the encountering Him ﷻ (on the Day of Judgment), and love of attaining His reward; by understanding the insignificant value of this world compared to the Hereafter. It is by having the correct understanding of Allah ﷻ that all aspects of sadness within an individual are removed, which fills his heart with peace and happiness; Allah ﷻ has said:

Those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah), and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest²

¹ Transmitted Abu Ya'la.

² Surat Ar-Ra'd, verse 28-29.

they are delighted in their conviction and faithfulness, about the Right Path, set for them in Islam.

A great number of people living in the west are deprived of this gentle-heartedness; Dale Carnegie says: "Statistics has confirmed that worry is the number-one killer in America. During the Second World War, almost thirty million men were killed in combat; while during the same period, heart disease killed two million civilians – and one million of those casualties were caused by a kind of heart disease that is brought on by worry and stressful living. Yes heart disease is one of the chief reasons why Dr. Alexis Carrel said: 'Businessmen who do not know how to fight worry die young'.

It is rare that the Native Americans or Chinese suffer from heart disease; they take life lightly – however you see the number of doctors, who die of heart failure, is twenty times more than the number of farmers who die of the same disease, because doctors live a strained and nervous life, and pay a high price for it."

Certainly, worry and anxiety can destroy giants, and even ruin those faces, which are full of life.

I used to be surprised to see a person overwhelmed by sadness, following a nervous breakdown, with his teeth falling out; so I found, in the discoveries of modern medicine, that a difficult mental crisis has a strong effect on the body; it turns the digestive juices into venoms; which prevent the stomach from benefiting from the richness of one's food, as well as cracking and displacing teeth.

We have read how the ageing of Prophet Ya'cub (Jacob) ﷺ had caused him lose his sight; and how anxiety had reached its limit with Aishah ؓ - the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, when she was accused by the slanders – so she kept on weeping until she said: "I thought that sorrow would tear open my liver".

People have realized the danger of grief, in the existence of the nations and their production, so in Germany, for example, a group was founded; using the motto "Power in Happiness". The best of the nations should welcome life with cheerfulness and hope, in order to benefit from their time and wealth; and it is necessary for the rulers to prevent their nations from suffering from despair, pessimism and submission; for these cold feelings nail nations in the coffin of death, even before they die:

The one who dies and rests is not the real dead person,
The dead is rather the one among the living,
Whose life is dispirited and sad,
Dejected and worried with little hope and expectation.

I don't think there is man with a sound mind who would reject cheerfulness, nor a believer (in Allah ﷻ) who could live in pessimism and despair. Some forceful incidents could deprive him from his peace of mind and his contentment; therefore, he should turn to the Divine Power to seek help and protection, because if he submits to the effects of grief, it will just destroy his will and depress him.

It is for this reason that the Prophet ﷺ used to teach his Companions ؓ to seek help from Allah ﷻ to save them from misfortunes; Abu Sa'id ؓ said:

"One day the Messenger of Allah ﷺ entered the mosque. He saw there a man from the Ansar called Abu Umamah ؓ. He ﷺ said to him: 'What is the matter that I am seeing you sitting in the mosque when there is no time of prayer?' He replied: 'I am entangled in worries and debts, Messenger of Allah'. He ﷺ said: 'Shall I not teach you words by which, when you say them, Allah will remove your worries, and settle your debt?' He said: 'Why not, Messenger of Allah?' He ﷺ said: 'Say in the morning and evening: O Allah, I seek refuge in You from worry and grief, I seek refuge in You from incapacity and slackness, I seek refuge in You from cowardice and niggardliness, and I seek in You from being overcome by debt and being put in subjection by men'. He said: 'So I did, and Allah relieved me from my worries, and settled my debt for me'¹.

It is natural that repeating certain words can be a route to achieve a new mental condition, with which the life of Man can change, then his steps could become rightly guided, as they are supported by the help of Allah ﷻ.

I have noticed that the Prophet ﷺ was surprised to see the man sitting in the mosque, outside the time of prayer, so he taught him a supplication – with which to start his daily activities, away from mental constraints and inward speculation.

Shaddad bin Aws ؓ said:

¹ Transmitted by Abu Dawud.

"The Prophet ﷺ taught us to recite this supplication: 'O Allah, I beg of You steadfastness in (righteous) affairs and firm determination (to adhere to the path) of righteousness; I beg of You to make me grateful for Your Favour and excellent in my worship of You; I beg of You a sound heart and a truthful tongue, and I beg of You good, which You Know, I seek refuge in You from evil, that You know, and I seek pardon from You, for what You know'¹.

Ibn 'Umar ؓ said:

"The Prophet ﷺ seldom got up to leave an assembly without using these supplications, for his companions: 'O Allah, apportion to us such fear of You as will come between us and acts of disobedience to You, such obedience to You as will bring us to Your Paradise, and such certainty that the calamities of this world will be made easy for us, by You. Let us enjoy our hearing, our sight and our power as long as You do grant us life, and do the same for those who inherit from us. Grant us revenge on those who have wronged us, and help us against those who are hostile to us. Let no calamity befall our religion, let not worldly affairs be our greatest care of all, that we know about, and let not those who do not show mercy towards us rule over us'².

These supplications – as we pointed out in our previous books – resemble the enthusiastic hymns, which stir the feelings of a moving troop; they represent the great support of truth, enlightenment and certainty, to help overcome the hardships of life. They also define

¹ Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

² Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

objectives which should be considered and implemented; based on commitments to work under the banner of Iman (faith), good health and justice.

Adopting this method, man can enjoy a harmonious life mentally and physically.

Some people see supplication as a negative attitude to life! Is it not the way to present someone's need and wait for an answer?

Supplication is, above all, defining a course, describing one of the highest examples; Ibraheem (Abraham) ؑ said:

﴿My Lord! Make me, and my descendants, people who establish Salat. My Lord! Accept my prayer...﴾¹,

and with this prayer, he established Salat as a way of life, the main concern of Man.

What is the position of those who become annoyed with Salat, and perform it lazily, when you read the supplication of Ibrahim ؑ?

Believers in Allah ﷻ say:

﴿Our Lord, give us joy in our wives and children and make us a good example for those who have Taqwa²﴾³

¹ Surat Ibrahim, verse 40.

² To have Taqwa is to be mindful of Allah and fear Him.

³ Surat Al-Furqan, verse 74.

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they request, with this call, to have a good, established and happy family, and they also aspire to be among the first of those who are always mindful of Allah ﷻ in their lives.

Nevertheless, there are some Muslim people who avoid the truth of belief in Allah and The Last Day; they think that this faith is opposed to reality.

They perceive the notion of Faith as an ideology that disregards life, and brings only misery and hardship to the lives of individuals and groups. This is a grave mistake, and an unjust treatment of the religion; for the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad ﷺ, never perceived life in this manner, nor made Islam such a burden; rather, he used to say:

*"O Allah, by Your Knowledge of the Unseen and Your Power to create, grant me life as long as You consider life to be best for me, and take me when You consider death to be best for me. O Allah, I ask You, having awe for You, both within my heart and openly. I ask You for words of truth, in (times of) pleasure and anger; I ask You for moderation, both in (times of) poverty and riches; I ask You for felicity that does not pass away. I ask You for comfort that does not end. I ask You for satisfaction with what has been decreed. I ask You for a pleasant life after death. I ask You for the pleasure of seeing Your Face, and desire to meet You, in a state in which distress will not cause (me) harm nor (Your) testing lead (me) astray. O Allah, beautify us with the adornment of faith, and make us guides who are rightly guided."*¹

¹ Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

Some people consider pain, hardship and worry as essential elements to strengthen their Islamic faith, or as means of pleasing Allah ﷻ, despite the fact that the Prophet ﷺ used to dislike them, and take refuge with Allah from them. Abu Hurairah ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ used to seek refuge in Allah from difficult afflictions, distress and misery, fulfilment of Divine Precepts, and the malice of one's enemies.

There were people, among the Sahabah ؓ (the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ) who made such a mistake, thinking that committing oneself to harm was an atonement to one's sins; so the Prophet ﷺ explained to them that the issue is simpler than that.

*It was narrated that the Prophet ﷺ visited a Muslim, who had grown feeble like a chicken, to inquire (about his health); so he ﷺ said to him: "Did you supplicate for anything or beg of Him (Allah ﷻ) about that?" He said: "Yes. I used to utter (these words): 'Impose punishment upon me in this world, what You are going to impose upon me in the Hereafter'". Thereupon Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "Hallowed be Allah, you have neither the power nor forbearance to take upon yourself (the burden of His Punishment). Why did you not say this: 'O Allah, grant us good in this world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the torment of Fire'". He (the Prophet) made this supplication (for him) and he recovered well."*¹

The Prophet ﷺ heard a man saying: "O Allah, I beg of You steadfastness", so he ﷺ said to him: "You have asked Allah for tribulation, so (now) ask Him for good health".

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Matraf bin Abdullah said: "I prefer to be in good health and thank Allah, than be in tribulation and steadfast; for well-being is closer to safety. Therefore, I prefer gratitude to steadfastness, because the latter applies to the people of tribulation".

Dr. Zaki Mubarak said: "The person making the above statement sees good health as one of the gateways to safety – safety of the souls – because tribulation exposes the selves to fear and anxiety with unsafe consequences; as for health, it helps balance them, and enables Man to do good deeds."

The truth is that Man acts in haughtiness when he welcomes misfortunes, because he is affected by his nervous system most of the times. So it is to his benefit to ask Allah ﷻ for health, and avoid exposing himself to any trial; he might be unable to face the difficulties he hoping to meet, and risks losing his will once he is involved in them...

When reflecting on these situations, one can see that blessings and health increase the spiritual link of Man with his Lord. There is a great difference between the two states: The state of serenity, and that of contentedness; the one who is serene looks at his Lord with gentleness and submission, as for the steadfast person, he is sometimes vain, because of the patience he shows to his suffering; and we know that vanity is one of the most damaging ailments to human lives.

This is a good statement, as we like to be servants of beneficence, not servants of tribulation. However, our

wishes do not always come true! How many storms rage over us, filling our horizons with thunderous clouds; and how many times has an individual faced what he dislikes, and been deprived of what he desires! For these situations comes the role of patience which chases away anxiety, and contentedness which safeguards him from any curse.

In this context, Dr. Zaki says: "Submission to Allah is one of the morals of the self; it removes many tendencies generated by one's constantly thinking of the present commitment in the fortunes of life."

It is clear that this situation needs active determination, because contentment comes only after purifying the heart from any mental devilish insinuations. It is certainly a way of establishing peace and serenity, which is the biggest prize in a moral life.

It might be said that contentment generates stupidity, and allures the self into enjoying sluggishness. We reply to this assumption that contentment with reality do not oppose, in any way, the desire to perfect oneself, giving oneself all worldly, mental and spiritual nourishment...

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Be content with what Allah has divided for you, and you will be the richest of all people"; so do not let contentedness be an excuse to negligence and laziness.

Instead, be satisfied with your day, and hope for a happy future...

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How to Eliminate the Causes of Worry?

I do not know of anything, that people have conspired against, and avoided, more than they do with regard to "the truth"! Few are its perceivers, of whom only a few can appraise it, value its worth and live for it. Illusions and assumptions are made by many people; if you decide to search for the truth everywhere, from everything you hear, you would soon become exhausted.

There are thousands of newspapers and radio waves diffused around the world, day and night, but if you look into their contents, you would observe only a fraction of the truth, in the midst of a heap of lies; a glimmer of truth, struggling to shine in the middle of the night.

In the context of religious belief, many religions have established themselves upon false information or myths. In the politics, many selfish aims are made to look like acts of justice, and many political powers have treated what is good as evil. For this reason, Allah ﷻ said to His Prophet, and to all those associated with the truth, in a chaotic society:

And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah's Path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie ¹.

¹ Surat Al-An'am, verse 116.

And He ﷻ said:

They if they testify, do not testify with them. And you should not follow the vain desires of those who treat Our Signs as falsehood, and those who do not believe in the Hereafter, and they hold others as equal (in worship) with their Lord ¹.

And He ﷻ said:

And most of them follow nothing but conjecture. Certainly, conjecture can be of no avail against the truth. Surely, Allah is All-Aware of what they do ².

In such a world, where the truth has become so alienated, it is important for Man to endeavour to embrace it, and refer to it, whenever he feels he is being led away from it. This is a reason why Allah ﷻ has ordered every faithful person to ask Him for Right Guidance, and allowed him not to become weary from repeating this quest, from time to time.

In every obligatory or optional Salat, the individual stands before his Lord, saying:

Guide us to the Straight Path, the Way on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger (such as the Jews), nor of those who went astray (such as the Christians) ³.

¹ Surat Al-An'am, verse 150.

² Surat Yunus, verse 36.

³ Surat Al-Fatiha, verse 6-7.

What is this Straight Path? It is not a railway track in a particular country, nor a bridge built, here or there. It is the path traced by the individual himself, between life problems, and the line he uses to seek the right answer to diverse opinions.

Whenever he holds on to the bonds of straightness and displays the truth, in his daily and future activities, he is then on the way to success. However, this guidance, to the truth, and the determination to stay firm on its path, requires a great deal of effort, and a great aspiration for Divine support. The Prophet ﷺ used to incline to Salat, to add strength to his will (from Allah), whenever he was affected by a crisis.

An individual may act haphazardly in life, while being deluded by having the wrong insight of how to value the facts of life, around him; this leads him, for example, to move from one falsehood to another, and misbehave over an obligation or a crisis.

Allah ﷻ has prohibited Man from wandering behind illusions; He ﷻ said:

And do not follow (be witness to) that of which you have no knowledge. Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart; of each of those you will be questioned by Allah ¹.

¹ Surat Al-Isra', verse 36.

Therefore, Man should use his intellect and his senses to acknowledge what is around him, and establish a plan for his course away from assumptions and falsehood.

Dale Carnegie said: "We must equip ourselves to deal with different kinds of worries by learning three basic steps of problem analysis, which are:

1. Get the facts.
2. Analyse the facts.
3. Arrive at a decision and then act on that decision.

We use this steps if we going to solve the problems that are harassing us, turning our days and nights into veritable hells"¹.

Certainly it is unavoidable, and the first step obliges us to carry out a calm contemplation around us, to collect the clear facts, and set our conduct upon that basis...

It is an obligation to gather these facts, even if it is hard for Man to do so; Man can stray away from the truth, because of his introversion over common habits or practices. And if he strays forever from the truth, how could he ever succeed in finding the right solution to his troubles in life?

It is out of wisdom that Allah ends many of His Verses stating the fact that many people are suffering from heedlessness, while they are unaware of it; Allah ﷻ has said:

¹ "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living" p.53.

Thus Allah makes clear to you His Laws in order that you may give thought ¹,

Then will you not remember?

Thus Allah makes clear His Laws to you, in order that you may understand ³.

It is as if Dale Carnegie were explaining the above verses, when he says: "If we bother with facts at all, we hunt like dogs after facts that bolster up what we already think – but ignore all the others! We want only the facts that justify our acts – the facts that fit in conveniently with our wishful thinking and justify our preconceived prejudices!

André Maurois said: "Everything that is in agreement with our personal desires, seems true. Everything that is not, puts us into a rage". Is it any wonder, then, that we find it so hard to get at the answers to our problems? Would we not have the same trouble trying to solve a second-grade arithmetic problem, if we went ahead on the assumption that two plus two equals five? Yet there are a lot of people in this world who make life a hell for themselves and others, by insisting that two plus two equals five – or maybe five hundred!

¹ Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 219.

² Surat Yunus, verse 3.

³ Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 242.

What can we do about it? We have to keep our emotions out of our thinking; and we must examine the facts in "an impartial, objective" manner.

The second step when collecting facts is to be calm when receiving them, and control oneself before anything may appear to be confusing or frightening in them. The lives of many leaders and heroes are replete with crises, which were faced with a great deal of wisdom and intellect, while overcoming fear and restricting it.

When conflict nearly erupted between the polytheists of Makkah and the Muslims who were in Al-Hudaybiyah, seeking to perform 'Umrah – and in the middle of the provocations and conditions set by the polytheists – the Prophet ﷺ concealed the sadness he felt, and ordered his Companions ﷺ to rid themselves of any suspicion or worry, and accept the treaty which would safeguard lives and spread peace, despite the conditions which they disliked. Concerning this, Allah ﷻ revealed:

When those who disbelieve had put in their hearts pride and haughtiness, then Allah sent down His Sakinah (calm and tranquillity) upon His Messenger and upon His believers, and made them stick to the word of piety, and they were all entitled to it and worthy of it. And Allah is All-Knower of everything ¹.

The term *sakinah* was repeated in many places, and whenever it is found, it refers to the calmness that Faith instils in people's souls; this calmness is derived from

¹ Surat Al-Fath, verse 26.

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being mindful of Allah, submissive to His judgment, and seeking His Support in times of confusion and oppression.

Man may find himself confronted by a series of propositions to overcome an existing crisis; he could analyse them all, and yet find that the most acceptable of them is also painful to accept; or he may look around himself, but find no such salvation. These types of ideas accumulate when there is lack of trust in Allah and lack of self-confidence.

As for the believer, he chooses a proposition that is more harmonious and makes good sense; then he proceeds with his life, without worrying what may happen; quoting the Verse:

Say: Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our Maula (Lord, Helper, Protector). And in Allah let the believers put their trust ¹.

When weak thoughts are removed, it is clear to see that Man is affected by illusions more than by reality; he usually feels the defeat within himself before he is beaten by the facts of life; Allah ﷻ said:

Those (believers) unto whom the people (hypocrites) said: 'Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army), therefore, fear them.' But it only increased them in Faith, and they say: 'Allah (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us)'. So

¹ Surat Al-Taubah, verse 51.

they returned with Grace and Bounty from Allah. No Harm touched them; and they followed the good Pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty ¹.

When Man becomes aware of the reality around him, and investigates it, without any fear; then the last step is to proceed, with determination, to execute his final decision with sincere firmness. I (the author) know many people who do not lack correct opinions; they are clever enough to uncover any hidden facts, however, they do not benefit from their shrewdness, because they lack self-determination; so they remain in their places, beleaguered with the feelings of confusion and perplexity. High-minded people dislike this kind of inhibition; saying: If you have an opinion then be determined; for weakness of opinion comes with hesitation.

Indeed, searching and examination have a deadline, after which everything is clarified, and there is only room for swift action, according to what is concluded as the correct decision; Allah ﷻ said:

And consult them in the affair; then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him) ².

Consultation regarding an issue should not proceed endlessly; it should lead to the next step, i.e. an obligatory duty. If any duty has been confirmed, then we

¹ Surat Al-An'am, verse 173-174.

² Surat Al-Imran, verse 159.

should show our determination to achieve it, and overcome all the causes of fear and inactivity, and seek the Help of Allah ﷻ, until we carry it out.

Dale Carnegie said: "I once asked Waite Phillips, one of Oklahoma's most prominent oil men, how he carried out decisions. He replied: 'I find that to keep thinking about our problems beyond a certain point is bound to create confusion and worry. There comes a time when any more investigation and thinking are harmful. There comes a time when we must decide and act and never look back'. And William James said: 'When once a decision is reached and execution is the order of the day, dismiss absolutely all responsibility and care about the outcome'. He meant – once you have made a careful decision based on facts, go into action. Don't stop to reconsider. Don't begin to hesitate, worry and retrace your steps. Don't lose yourself in self-doubting, which begets other doubts. Don't keep looking back over your shoulder"¹.

The truth is that great strength, known only in challenging fields; while glory and success remain sweet dreams in the minds of its people; yet they turn into reality once they have instilled some activity in people's minds.

Hesitation shows a lack of manhood, as well as a sign of weakness in the faith of a person; the Prophet disliked to retreat from fighting, once the majority of his Companions ﷺ decided to go forward. When the polytheists (Quraysh) reached Mount Uhud, the Prophet's initial opinion was to let them enter Madinah and fight

¹ "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living" p.58.

them in its streets; however, the majority of the Companions ﷺ suggested setting out and fighting them before Mount Uhud. Because of their majority and enthusiasm, they managed to convince others to follow their decision, so the Prophet ﷺ agreed to their plan. So he decided that they should prepare to confront the enemy outside Madinah. The Companions ﷺ felt that they had forced their decision against the will of the Prophet ﷺ, so they then proposed that the fighting be inside Madinah, but he ﷺ objected to the idea of retreat, and refused to let his management of affairs be affected by mixing hesitation and indecision with different desires; he ﷺ said conclusively:

"Once a prophet puts on his body armour on for war, he is not allowed to return until he has fought"¹.

So, let us study our positions in life carefully, and plan our future with insight, and then show our determination to go ahead, without submitting to any obstacle, or being distorted by apprehensiveness.

Let us have trust that Allah ﷻ has chosen this path for us, because He dislikes cowards, and supports those who have trust in Him ﷻ.

¹ Transmitted by Imam Ahmed, on the authority of Jabir ﷺ.

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Knowledge Produced by Action

In our studies, we have learnt that one definition of knowledge is the development of awareness; theories and faculties of reason that are concerned with consciousness. These theories refer to the laws, the principles and the terms used by people of different trends.

The faculties refer to the experience that the individual gains when acquiring knowledge of a particular science or all of methods of science; produced by extensive awareness and the use of those theories.

The established scholars are the ones who possess highest faculties, in a people with a broad based culture; they are a source for true understanding, judgment, education and performance.

Let us leave the field of theoretical knowledge, and move to the field of morals, behaviour, faith and activity, to say: religion is a complete course for progress and education; however, benefit from it is not attained by circulating its information among people, nor by memorising its laws, nor by the formal performance of its obligatory acts of worship.

This approach to the religion is less beneficial, rather it is of no avail; it is said in the traditions:

“Knowledge is of two types. Firstly, knowledge perceived by the heart, and that is useful knowledge; secondly, the knowledge at on the tip of one’s tongue, and that is an

argument from Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, against the children of Adam”¹.

George B. Shaw said: “If you teach a man anything, he will never learn”, i.e. that teaching does not produce anything amazing in the individual; and Dale Carnegie justified this interpretation, saying: “Learning is an active process. We learn by doing. So if you desire to master the principles in this book, do something about it. Apply these rules at every opportunity. If you don’t, you will forget them quickly. Only knowledge that is used sticks in your mind”; and this is true; it was narrated that one of the Tabi’ins² said: “We have learnt the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ by implementing them”. Action enlivens people, and animates them with real experience; and this knowledge which is generated by activity, is the faculty by which an individual may enlighten his life, and discover his way through life. Allah ﷻ said:

O you who believe! Fear Allah and believe in His Messenger, He will give you a double portion of His Mercy, and He will give a light by which you shall walk (straight), and He will forgive you. Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful³.

The prerequisite for one’s belief in the Messenger of Allah – after having fear of Allah – is to follow his Sunnah, since he was the living interpreter of the Guidance and Advice in the Book of Allah.

¹ Transmitted by Attirmidhi and Darimi.

² The Followers, the second generation of the early Muslims who did not meet Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, but who learned the Deen of Islam from his Companions.

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The believer who avoids unlawful acts, and regularly practices religious obligations, gains from his diligence, acquiring the ability to distinguish good from bad, and rarely suffers confusion about these issues; Allah ﷻ said:

You who believe! If you obey and fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (to judge between right and wrong), or making a way for you to get from any difficulty, and will expiate for you your sins, and forgive you, and Allah is the Owner of the Great Bounty ¹; You who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and fear Him, and (always) speak the truth; He will direct you to do righteous deeds. ².

Unused theoretical information resembles undigested food. Soldiers and students in the military institutes receive their theoretical trainings, and then practical exercises; nevertheless, their experience (and their fighting skills) remain below the level of those who have actually participated in fighting and experienced the horror of wars.

Likewise, learning to practise Salat starts with initial lessons, and then the performance of obligatory Salawat³. As for learning about submission and faithfulness – to Allah ﷻ – it comes as the performer of Salat stands before his Lord, with his perfection of the basic elements of

¹ Surat Al-Anfal, verse 29.

² Surat Al-Ahzab, verse 70-71.

³ Plural of Salat (daily Prayer).

Salat. Therefore, knowledge is generated through action, which is the conclusion of experience and resilience.

In the field of education and reformation, it is normal for perceptions (of knowledge) to develop to completion at a social and mental level; it is not acceptable for anyone to be content with speeches or interpretations, no matter how important they may be.

If you were ordered to do a good deed, do it first; and if you were prohibited from touching evil things, be the first to get away from them; and then endeavour to keep those orders and prohibitions, as an example for society, having enjoining good and prohibiting evil as the main objective. Desire for one's perfection leads to positive talk of this; yet those who long for it, would be content to just mention a few details about its methods; and leave the matter without taking any effective action; the way sweet hopes die in the minds of the idle.

Allah ﷻ dislikes this type of behaviour, because it is close to pretension, and because its people show negligence while they are aware of the Right Path:

You who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most hateful it is in the Sight of Allah that you say that which you do not do ¹.

If every good willed individual advanced from the level of theoretical conceptions to one of "activity", we would have avoided half our troubles and discomforts, as Dale Carnegie said, and would have solved the most

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complicated of our problems... Let us read the story he related about "Leon Shimkin, a businessman, in his own words (discussing the techniques he used to dispel his business worries): "I immediately stopped the procedure I had been using in my conferences for fifty years - a procedure that began with my troubled associates reciting all the details of what had gone wrong, and ending up by asking: 'What shall we do?' Second, I made a new rule - a rule that everyone who wishes to present a problem to me must first prepare and submit a memorandum answering these four questions:

1. What is the problem? (In the old days, we used to spend an hour or two in a worried conference without anyone's knowing specifically and concretely what the real problem was. We used to work ourselves into a lather, discussing our troubles without ever troubling to write out, specifically, what our problem was).


2. What is the cause of the problem? (As I look back over my career, I am appalled at the wasted hours I have spent, in worried conferences, without ever trying to find out, clearly, the conditions which lay at the root of the problem)

3. What are all possible solutions of the problem? (In the old days, one man in the conference would suggest one solution. Someone else would argue with him. Tempers would flare. We would often get clear off the subject, and at the end of the conference no one would have written down all the various things we could do to attack the problem).

4. What solution do you suggest? (I used to go into a conference with a man who had spent hours worrying about a situation and going around in circles, without ever once thinking through all possible solutions, and then writing down, 'This is the solution I recommend').

"My associates rarely come to me now with their problems. Why? Because they have discovered that in order to answer those four questions they have to get all the facts, and think their problems through. And after they have done that they find, in three quarters of the cases, they don't have to consult me at all, because the proper solution has popped out, like a piece of bread popping out from an electric toaster. Even in those cases where consultation is necessary, the discussion takes about one third the time, formerly required, because it proceeds along an orderly, logical path to a reasoned conclusion. Much less time is now consumed in worrying and talking about what is wrong; and a lot more action is obtained, by putting those things right".

There is another matter we would like to refer to: that talking to top businessmen and high ranking officials sometimes extends and intensifies the situation, without any clear outcome, except that their assistants enjoy "talking" to their boss. However, this talk is usually futile, or ineffective; indeed, if every one of them (assistants) resorted to self-determination, and dedication to his duty, to discover ways to improve it, then it would have been more productive, and more appropriate!

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conversations with the Prophet ﷺ by spending something in charity before their private consultation!

If anyone wishes to receive grace, from Allah ﷻ and His Prophet ﷺ, then he should spend in the Path of Allah; this is an ocean of rewards, and should be done prior to sitting with the Prophet ﷺ simply for the sake of sitting; as Allah ﷻ said:

O you who believe! When you consult the Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) in private, spend something in charity before your private consultation. That will be better and purer for you. But if you do not find the means for it, then verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful ¹.

It did not apply to anyone who wanted to speak to the Messenger of Allah, because they were free to talk to him ﷺ - and in many circumstances it was necessary to consult him - but the intended meaning was to highlight the Right Path, for believers to attain Allah's Grace, and to save much time for the Messenger of Allah. Allah ﷻ has said in this context:

Are you afraid of spending in charity before your private consultation with him? If then you do not do it, while Allah has forgiven you, then (at least) offer prayers perfectly and give Zakat (charity) and obey Allah. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do ².

¹ Surat Al-Mujadilah, verse 12.

² Surat Al-Mujadilah, verse 13.

Social intercourse with great personalities – as we have learnt through experience – can sometimes be a waste of time, and a distraction from (many) obligations. So it is not surprising that restrictions should be applied to them, and that they should be warned about spending time only in the most beneficial way.

The Ailments of Emptiness

In times of unemployment and inactivity, thousands of vices are committed, and deadly germs are ignored; therefore, action is a message for living people, but idle ones are too inactive to react. If our present world is a time to sow the seeds for the next (greater) life, time wasters are bound to end up as losers in the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ warned people not to disregard the greatest blessings, granted by Allah to them, such as good health and time, when he ﷺ said:

*"There are two blessings which many people lose: (they are) health and free time (for doing good)"*¹.

There are many healthy people, who have plenty of free time, yet still struggle in their lives, with no activities to occupy their time, nor objectives. Is it for this reason people were created? Allah ﷻ said:

*«Did you suppose that We created you for amusement and that you would not return to us? Exalted be Allah, the King, the Real»*².

Life was created in truth; likewise, the earth and sky and everything between them. so Man, in this world, has to discover and acknowledge this truth, and live by it. But he chooses to submit to his own narrow-minded desires, and remain in their boundaries, distancing himself from everything else; so he has chosen a miserable resting place, both in his present and future life!

¹ Recorded by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas ؓ.

² Surat Al-Mu'minun, verses 115-116.

Ashafi' made a great statement, with regards to the basis of education: "If you do not occupy yourself with the truth, it (self) will occupy you with falsehood". This is true because the "self" does not rest; if it is not extremely busy with projects of benevolence, jihad and organized activities, it is likely to be taken over by the corrupt ideas, which would trap it up in circles of lies and deception.

The best thing to safeguard in the life of Man, is to have a plan to use his time wisely, leaving no chance for the devil to tempt him. The distribution of Islamic duties is based upon this truth; that is not to leave any gaps for the self to be filled with falsehood; Dale Carnegie explains this fact, saying: "Most of us have little trouble 'losing ourselves in actions' while we have our noses to the grindstone and are doing our day's work. But the hours after work – they are the dangerous ones. Just when we are free to enjoy our own leisure, and ought to be happiest – that is when the blue devils of worry attack us. That is when we begin to wonder whether we are getting anywhere in life; whether we are in a rut; whether the boss 'meant anything' by that remark he made today. When we are not busy, our minds tend to become a near vacuum. Every student of physics knows that 'nature abhors a vacuum'. The nearest thing to a vacuum that you and I will probably ever see is the inside of an incandescent electric light bulb. Break that bulb – and nature forces air in, to fill the theoretically empty space.

Nature also rushes in to fill the vacant mind. With what? Usually with emotions. Why? Because emotions of worry, fear, hate, jealousy, and envy are driven by

primeval vigour and the dynamic energy of the jungle. Such emotions are so violent that they tend to drive out of our minds all peaceful, happy thoughts and emotions".

It is the educators' right to warn against the dangers of emptiness, and protect people's minds against its evil; so the best means, in these situations, is to develop firm policies, for a lasting structure.

The only remedy for worry is to become completely occupied, doing something constructive, and I believe that society would be able to rid itself of many vices, once it controls its free time, and guides its individuals in the use of their potentials, for their own benefit. Therefore, there would be no time to waste, and no chance for worry to take over one's mind.

In the old times, the reformers defined the idleness of the rich as an expedient to vice, and we add here that the idleness of the destitute is the waste of considerable human potential, and disgraceful dissipation of strength and potential that Allah ﷻ has stored in the hearts and veins, which would change the world if they were properly used!

The most approved and encouraged systems are the ones which adhere to this truth and organize themselves around it.

The majority of Islam's regulations focus on the struggle against oneself (a Jihad against one's carnal desires) and against people (by not submitting to their tyrannies;

preventing the corruption of the faith, and reforming all areas of their lives).

Both ways of struggle consume every moment of one's life, and leave no room for futility, dismay or carelessness.

The Prophet ﷺ used to ask Allah ﷻ to help him hold on to his religion, and invigorate his heart with life; saying: "ya muqaliba lqulub.." (Abu Dawud). This devoted procurement of support is the basis of mental perfection; as for his ongoing engagement with Jihad, in general; it was part of his biography; indeed, he never rested from opposing polytheism in every part of Al-Jazeera (Arabian Peninsula), until every part was filled with Iman (Islamic faith) and Taqwa (awe or fear of Allah).

His Companions, Abu Bakr and 'Umar followed, in the leadership, never allowing the Muslims to sit around; so they fought against tyranny, and within a few years they spread the light of Islam in the world.

So, what happened to the Muslims after they gave up these obligations, which were occupying all their time? They simply turned against each other, letting civil strife spread among themselves!

The generation that came afterwards focused all its attention in trying to explain the Verses in the Qur'an, which were open to interpretation. Therefore, they misinterpreted all the Verses in the Book of Allah – both those with clear judgment and the ones open to interpretation.

If the truth is used to all its potential by an individual, falsehood will vanish; and if it (the truth) takes control of his hearing, there will be no place for devilish insinuations or suspicions.

Dale Carnegie asks: "Why does such a simple thing as keeping busy help to drive out anxiety? Because of a law – one of the most fundamental laws ever revealed by psychology. And that law is: that it is impossible for any human mind, no matter how brilliant, to think of more than *one thing* at any given time".

This is true and related to the statement of Allah ﷻ: **«Allah has not allotted to any man two hearts within his breasts»**¹. The fact that you are unable to imagine two things at the same time, likewise, you are unable to gather two opposite feelings. It is not in our ability to feel excited about a certain activity, and feel worried about it at the same time; one of the feelings will dispel the other.

This simple law is one which enabled psychiatrists attached to the army, to discover some strange findings during the war; when they visited the soldiers who were mentally affected by the war. They used to say to their leaders: "Occupy them with any activity..."

So much talent and potential was ruined by emptiness... and concealed behind a mountain of passivity and contempt.

¹ Surat Al-Ahzab, verse 4.

This disgraceful waste of valuable time is followed by an unlimited number of calamities upon political, social and mental conditions. It was narrated that 'Umar bin Al-Khattab ؓ said: "I would see a man and be impressed by him, yet if I were to ask about him, and they should say he was inactive (jobless), my estimation of him would fall"; and the Prophet ﷺ said in the Hadith: "Verily, Allah loves a believer who is active".

Certainly, whole nations can drop, in Allah's estimation, and that refers to serious, productive people, because they are inactive; they have been ruined by emptiness, and been submitted to annihilation.

I consider the main reason behind the backwardness of the Arab nations, and the Islamic nation as a whole, is due to the negligence, passivity and resignation which has taken over their social and mental states.

It is impossible for this large populations to achieve any success, in this life, if they do not change and improve their style of life, and erase all the signs of inactivity and emptiness...

Do not let Trivialities Overwhelm your Life

The fear of committing major sins helps an individual to distance himself from them saving him from temptation...

Although, he would fear for his life in the case of accidentally taking poison – because of its clear danger – yet, he would care little if he should take tiny quantities of it, if it was in the form of contamination from meals, dirty plates or hands. Therefore, he is likely to harm his body with diseases as deadly as a bullet or a vicious stabbing!

To warn the believers against committing even small sins, which would threaten their lives if they gathered many of them, the Prophet ﷺ called upon his Ummah to avoid such sins, and purify itself from (any of) them.

It is true that the main objective in his Message was to fight polytheism, and remove its beliefs from people's minds.

He managed during his lifetime to destroy the state of Asnam (worshipped statues), and establish a nation that worshipped Allah ﷻ alone.

Nevertheless, he ﷺ has warned against some issues that the devil might be pleased to see people approach; the

way he is pleased when they fall in the trap of polytheism; he ﷺ said:

*"The devil has lost all hope of seeing you worship idols in the land of the Arabs, yet he will accept from you lesser sins, and they will be considered as grave offences on the Day of Judgment"*¹

and on the Farewell Pilgrimage, he ﷺ said, as he set the foundations of the perfect conduct:

"O people, the devil has lost all hope of ever seeing you worship idols in the land of the Arabs, however, if he is obeyed in other aspects of life, he would be very pleased with sins you may regard as insignificant. Therefore, be wary of his effect upon your religion".

Dale Carnegie said: "We often face the major disasters of life bravely – and let the trifles; the "pains in the neck", get us down. For example, Samuel Pepys tells in his diary about seeing Sir Harry Vane's head chopped off, in London. As Sir Harry mounted the platform, he was not pleading for his life, but was pleading with the executioner not to hit the painful boil on his neck! That was another thing that Admiral Byrd discovered, down in the terrible cold and darkness of the polar nights – that his men fussed more about "pains in the necks" than about the big things. They bore, without complaining, the dangers, the hardships, and the cold that was often eighty degrees below zero. 'But', says Admiral Byrd, 'I know of bunkmates who quit speaking because each suspected each other of inching his gear into the other's allotted space; and I know of one who could not eat unless he could find a place in the mess hall, out of sight of the Fletcherist who solemnly chewed his food twenty-

¹ Transmitted by Attabarani.

eighty times before swallowing'. I would not be surprised, for even little things like that have the power to drive, even, disciplined men to the edge of insanity"¹.

Dale Carnegie, also, relates a story about a "gigantic tree", which naturalists tell us stood for some four hundred years. During the course of its long life, it was struck by lightening fourteen times, and the innumerable avalanches and storms of four centuries thundered past it. It survived them all. In the end, however, an army of beetles attacked the tree and leveled it to the ground. The insects ate their way through the bark and gradually destroyed the inner strength of the tree by their tiny, but incessant attacks. A forest giant, which age had not withered, nor lightening blasted, nor storms subdued, fell at last before beetles so small that a man could crush them between his forefinger and his thumb.

Are we not like that battling giant of the forest? Do we not manage somehow to survive the rare storms and avalanches, and lightening blasts of life, only to let our hearts be eaten out by little beetles of worry?"

Such examples, mentioned by the author (Carnegie), from real life, he was analyzing, were similarly and previously quoted by the Prophet ﷺ, and taken from the natural Arab environment; Abdullah bin Mas'ud ؓ said: "Avoid the sins which are considered insignificant; for their example is like that of a people who stopped by a river and every member collected a piece of wood until they had enough to make a fire to cook their bread.

¹ "How To Stop Worrying and Start Living" p. 79.

These (light) sins can be very destructive once combined in an individual"¹.

Sa'd bin Junaadah ؓ narrated:

"When the Battle of "Hunain" ended, we left the place and stopped on our way back at deserted spot, so the Prophet ﷺ said to us: 'Go and gather anything you may find on this land, even a bone or a tooth, and bring it over.' An hour later, we managed to gather a pile of small debris; so the Prophet ﷺ said: "Can you see this? Likewise, sins gather in a man among you the way you have gathered this (pile), so fear Allah, and do not commit any small or grave sins, because they are counted against you".

People who enjoin good and forbid evil have acknowledged, from their experience, that sometimes man displays certain things, without being aware of them, while others record them upon him, and draw many conclusions from them; the outcome might be dreadful. Therefore, one should watch all details of his actions in order to avoid any bad consequences.

It is regrettable that some people highlight, strongly, any misbehaviour of an individual, but disregard all his good deeds and values. Allah ﷻ does not punish for the trivialities, but forgives any act coming as a result of a slight mental derangement, of any believer seeking perfection in his acts to the best of his ability; He ﷻ said:

﴿If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden to do, We shall remit from you your

¹ Transmitted by Ahmed.

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¹ Transmitted by Ahmed.

*small sins, and admit you to a Noble Entrance
(Paradise)*¹

It is a relief for people that Allah ﷻ forgives their lapses and mistakes; and it is for the benefit of people that they should co-exist upon the ideal of having tolerance towards one another.

This ideal is well practiced within the bonds of friendship, despite the occasional row sometimes. This is compelled for spouses, in order to keep their lives in harmony; therefore, if a husband should feel annoyed by a mistake from his wife, he should remember that she also has some correctness; so he should feel sad about her weak side, and should look at her positive side. In this context, the Prophet ﷺ said:

*"A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another"*².

Nevertheless, it is sad that many trifles of life shake the stability of thousands of households, destroying their relationships, and leaving them in complete dismay and helplessness; Dale Carnegie explains the consequences of the impact with these trivialities: "Little things in marriage drive people to the edge of insanity, and cause half the 'heartaches in the world'. That is at least what the authorities say; for example, Judge Joseph Sabath of Chicago, after acting as arbiter in more than forty thousand unhappy marriages, declared: 'Trivialities are at the bottom of most marital unhappiness'; and Frank

¹ Surat An-Nisa', verse 31.

² Transmitted by Muslim, on the authority of Abu Hurairah.

Hogan, former District Attorney in New York County, says: 'Fully half the cases in our criminal courts originate from little things. Domestic wrangling, an insulting remark, a disparaging word, a rude action – those are the little things that lead to assault and murder. Very few of us are cruelly and greatly wronged. It is the small blows to our self-esteem, the indignities, and the little jolts to our vanity, which cause half the heartaches in the world'. This speech, which describes the causes behind many crimes in America, can be applied to describe the causes of the crimes in our cities and countryside.

The reality is that the first cause to all the horrific events you hear and see is the poor conception of things, the excessive sensitiveness to personal dignity, and the quickness to interpret any behaviour as a sign of contempt, that should only be treated with a violent reaction, along with other illusions which inflate the state of the trivialities.

The cure! There should be some mental training to depict the right pictures of life; pictures which are not corrupted by self desires and exaggerations. Then judge each of them openly; putting both the similarities and the shortcomings on the same side, not forgetting to see the good, without evil overwhelming it!

Thus, any misery or unpleasant situation, the individual might feel or be involved in, would vanish.

Fate and Divine Decree

The feeling of the believer, that the reins of power do not slip from the Hands of Allah ﷻ, fill his heart with immense serenity; indeed, no matter how much events are disturbed or conditions are changed, only the Will of Allah remains settled:

«And Allah has full power and control over His Affairs, but most of men do not know»¹.

This explains the trust and dependence that a Muslim puts in his Lord, after fulfilling his obligations. He relies on Him ﷻ, accepting the outcome of his future, after making an effort, with regard to his activities and preparations in life!

Truly, it is irrational to feel disturbed and over anxious about failing in some areas which are beyond the range of our will-power. It is possible that individual could regret this negligence, which would lead to strong self-doubt. But when the Divine Decree is established over him – for one is helpless against it – then there will be time for reconsideration, and consequently, there will be no more worry, nor doubt. One should therefore confront his life with certitude and bravery.

However, if an individual disregards the power of Allah, perceiving a tragic event as a set of surging waves which could take the lives of some and spare others; then he lives with an empty heart, becoming a victim of

¹ Surat Yusuf, verse 21.

circumstances. The reliance on Divine Decree – and this is not the preaching of the Fatalists – generates enough courage to face both the present and the future, and helps the individual accept the loss of lives and wealth. This is exactly the meaning of the Verse:

«Say: 'Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our Maula (Lord, Helper and Protector).' And in Allah let the believers put their trust. Say: 'Do you wait for us (for anything) except one of the two best things (martyrdom or victory)»¹

i.e. achieving victory in the battle, or martyrdom (without gaining the battle) – which is beneficial as well, because the reward with Allah ﷻ is guaranteed. As for those who are faithless, whether they are losers or victorious in the battle, they remain between two punishments sooner or later!

«While we wait for you, either that Allah will afflict you with a punishment from Himself or at our Hands. So wait, we too are waiting with you»².

This is the position of the believers, regarding fate, which is characterized by firmness and determination, and is devoid of any doubt or suspicion.

However, many people ignore this reality, and even deny it; they pursue their activities while harbouring their constant worries, and cold feelings. They are not only concerned with any misfortunes afflicted upon them, but also with their anticipated sorrows, which they assume

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are in store for them, of the future. Their imagination fills their lives with the specter of death and destruction, and makes them believe that they are likely to be exposed to dangers here and treachery there...!

Dale Carnegie said: "To be sure, I have been talking about the worries of youth and adolescence. But many of our adult worries are almost as absurd. You and I could probably eliminate nine tenths of our worries right now, if we would cease our fretting long enough to discover whether, by *the law of averages*, there was any real justification for our worries.

The most famous insurance company on earth – Lloyd's of London – has made countless millions of dollars out of the tendency of everybody to worry about things that rarely happen. Lloyd's of London bets people that the disasters they are worrying about will never occur. However, they don't call it betting; they call it insurance. But it is really betting based on the law of averages. This great insurance firm has been going strong for over two hundred years; and unless human nature changes, it will still be going strong fifty centuries from now, by insuring shoes and ships and sealing wax against disasters that, by the law of averages, don't happen nearly so often as people imagine"¹.

Worrying about an unknown future, anticipation of heavy losses, or having feelings of weakness are the imaginary calamities that are the secret behind the set up of insurance companies, covering any aspect of life. Considering the difference between what really occurs

¹ "How To Stop Worrying and Start Living" p.65.

and what does not, these insurance companies obtain a huge amount of money, exploiting the anxiety of those people who fear for their lives and their wealth. Dale Carnegie tried to cure people who suffer from mental illusions, by quoting some of the genuine events which befell people in the land and at sea. In our view, this treatment does not cure the underlying cause, which will continue to spread as long as people's hearts are devoid of Iman (faith).

Modern civilization is badly ignorant about Allah ﷻ, and therefore it has a "shaky" trust in Him ﷻ. It is for this reason that they treat their ailments with a weaker form of medicine, by betting, known as "insurance", and using statistics to demonstrate to worried people that the percentage of actual accidents is less than they could have imagined.

We advise taking precautions for the future, and earmarking compensation for the stricken and injured; however, we condemn the trade of fear which comes as a result of a lack of certainty, as practiced by insurance companies; and we renounce the terror or fright, which can overpower cowards, when uncertainty urges them to anticipate death, at every new horizon!

Carnegie narrated a story of a businessman who was used to torture himself with these ideas: "What if there's a train wreck? What if my fruit is strewn all over the countryside? What if a bridge collapses as my cars are going across it? Of course, this fruit was insured; but he still feared that if he did not deliver his fruit on time, he could risk the loss of his market. He worried so much

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that he feared he had a stomach ulcer and went to a doctor. The doctor told him there was nothing wrong with him, except jumpy nerves. 'I saw the light then', he said, 'and began to ask myself questions. I said to myself: 'Look here, Jim Grant, how many fruit cars have you handled over the years?' The answer was: 'About twenty-five thousand?' then I asked myself: 'How many of those cars were ever wrecked?' The answer was: 'Oh, maybe five.' Then I said to myself: 'Only five – out of twenty-five thousand? Do you know what that means? A ratio of five thousand to one! In other words, by the law of averages, based on experience, the chances are five thousand to one against one of your cars ever being wrecked. So what are you worried about?'

I (the author) say: The spreading of serenity, by revealing the facts in this accurate manner, is very much appreciated. Nevertheless, it does not satisfy people with melancholic temperament, and tremulous misgivings; in fact, the pessimistic individual retreats before the clouds of imagination that gather over his mind. As long as the weakness of his Iman (Faith) dominates him, he is always anticipating a curse to fall upon him, even with the least percentage of evil that might take place. The minds of such people are never settled! Except if it is joined by sincere faith in Allah ﷻ, submission to Him, and acceptance of His Decrees. The worst misfortunes should be accepted as Divine Decree.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

*"No one of you will be a believer until he affirms his faith in the Divine Decree"*¹

Such feelings are a relief from distress, and remove all heavy distress; as he ﷺ said:

*"Part of the happiness of a son of Adam consists in his pleasure in knowing what Allah has decreed for him; part of the misery of a son of Adam consists in his abandonment of asking Allah's blessing; and part of the misery of a son of Adam consists in his displeasure with what Allah had decreed for him"*²

We should stress one more time that the cycle of submission and passivity starts with anything that overpowers the common will, and goes beyond free will. Therefore, there should not be the excuse of fate, or arguing with it, since a person could either be involved in an act, or just avoid it. But once your will is exercised, leave the affairs to its Director, Most High, who accepts them, whenever He likes, without any difficulty.

It is strange that some believers prefer submission and idleness, under the pretext of relying on Allah, and resignation to His Will.

This is pure madness, and lack of intellect and faith. It is exemplified in the quote of a poet:

Chasing after a livelihood – while shares have been divided!

Is an outrage, which brings an individual down!

People have a strange attitude with regards to Allah! That American businessman suffered from insomnia, because

¹ Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

² Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

of his fear of losing his products before they reached their destination – if the bridge collapsed! This Arab poet preferred to remain in a deep sleep, to avoid undergoing any hardship in his living, because the people's livelihoods had already been allocated.

The truth lies in the middle between these two extremes; we fulfill the required workload, and we suppress any doubts from our hearts, after settling our duties; therefore, we accept what Allah ﷻ does for us, and He ﷻ only does good.

The Prophet's traditions about Fate are a cure for anxiety and pessimism, but not an excuse for idleness.

It is in the benefit of people to contemplate fate, especially when it dominates beyond our control, and all aspects of the creation of Allah; whether sweet or bitter, good or bad; that it brings. One should also have command over one's feelings, to avoid exceeding proper bounds of behaviour. Therefore, we can see that people of knowledge and experience are moderate, in matters of happiness and sadness; sometimes, their moderation reaches a limit of emotional coldness and indifference, so that they face both good fortunes and calamities in a balanced way. Even if their approach or concepts may be slightly different, their objectives are in accordance with the Verse:

«Nothing occurs, either in the earth or in yourselves, without its being in a Book, before We make it happen. That is something easy for Allah. That is so that you will not be grieved about the things that pass you by nor exult over the things

that come to you. Allah does not love any vain or boastful man»¹.

The aim is not to lose the human feelings of sorrow and happiness, but to prevent excessive feelings; excessive joy can affect one's rightness, while constant sorrow can suppress one's will.

A believer who comprehends the Will of Allah ﷻ, in everything that affects one, does not get lost in irritation nor excitement; one enjoys being focused controlling his emotions, and this is largely due to one's strong belief in fate.

A feeble man could easily be frightened by any calamity affecting him, losing control of his thinking. Instead of preparing himself to face up to reality, he loses his mind in his sorrows, which keeps him prostrated with grief, without changing anything. When the poet, Ibn Arrumi, lost his son, he mourned over him in a poem which described his stunned reaction and refusal to accept the loss. It has no effect but to cause him grief and more distress!

As for the sound and mature position of certainty, we see it in the life of Ya'qub (Jacob) ﷺ, when his sons came to him with the news that Yusuf (Joseph) ﷺ, their younger brother, had been eaten by a wolf, as they claim. Ya'qub ﷺ simply said:

¹ Surat Al-Hadid, verses 22,23.

«It is Allah alone who is my Help in face of the events that you describe»¹

The old man waited too long for his absent child, to no avail; years passed by, while he kept up his hope in the unknown, but instead of receiving his long awaited son, he had to face up to the loss of another son. The new wound opened up the old one!

What could he do? Did he start wailing and lamenting his fortunes? No! He simply said:

«But beauty lies in having steadfastness. Perhaps Allah will bring them all together. He is indeed All-Knowing and All-Wise»²

He was never taken over by despair; he bore the last misfortune the way he endured the previous one, relying upon the Mercy of Allah ﷻ; so he said to his sons:

«My sons, seek news of Yusuf and his brother. Do not despair of solace from Allah. No one despairs of solace from Allah, except the polytheist people»³

We observe the good example of this conduct, and so we must learn how to stand firm in the face of cruel events. We must accept and co-operate with the inevitable.

How would you react if you were afflicted by anything that you disliked? If you had the ability to change it, then it would be pure madness to accept it and bear it... but if

¹ Surat Yusuf, verse 18.

² Surat Yusuf, verse 83.

³ Surat Yusuf, verse 87.

it were a great struggle, beyond one's ability, then it would be wise to be calm and showing self-composure.

The only sound path is to acknowledge reality, but seeking a change from the One Who has the Highest Will; The Giver of abundant good.

The shocking events may awaken one's weakening Iman (faith), and become the cause for an individual to return to Allah ﷻ. This result can turn an ailment into a cure, or distress into harmony; these are undoubtedly the most pleasant benefits from one's certainty in Allah, and acceptance of His Will.

These benefits are better than those of Dale Carnegie; instead of having belief in Fate and Divine Decree, he advised that a stricken person should show humility before the storms of life, the way trees stand up to them! He is forgiven for his description, because he never referred to the cure, which is with us; he said: "I once refused to accept an inevitable situation with which I was confronted. I played the fool and railed against it, and rebelled. I turned my nights into hells of insomnia. I brought upon myself everything I did not want. Finally, after a year of self-torture, I had to accept what I knew, from the outset, I could not possibly alter. I should have cried out years ago with Walt Whitman:

Oh, to confront night, storms, hunger,
Ridicule, accident, rebuffs as the trees and animals do.

I spent twelve years working with cattle; yet I never saw a Jersey cow getting a temperature because the pasture was burning up from a lack of rain or because of sleet and

cold or because her bull friend was paying too much attention to another heifer. Animals confront night, storms, and hunger calmly; so they never have nervous breakdowns or stomach ulcers; and they never go insane”¹.

That was the human cure he suggested, to confront any crisis, with only materialistic benefits!

We, as Muslims, do not see this as a good example for curing Man from his sorrows. The resignation to Allah is better than this worldly approach. Also, something better than the previous words of poet “Whitman”, are the words of Allah ﷻ:

«We will test you with a certain amount of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and life and fruits. But give good news to the steadfast: Those who, when disaster strikes them, say: 'We belong to Allah and to Him we will return.' Those are the people who will have Blessings and Mercy from their Lord; they are the ones who are guided»²

Flexibility, with regards to confronting hardships is an attribute of sensible conduct, good faith in Allah ﷻ, and serenity in accepting His Divine Decree. This is also a successful means of restraining one's behaviour. It was said in the traditions: “I tried being flexible and the use of the sword, and I found that flexibility is sharper”.

¹ “How To Stop Worrying and Start Living” p.92.

² Surat Al-Baqarah, verses 155-175.

However, a flexible believer does not endure events with feebleness, nor hypocrisy, but becomes like a fighter in the ring who does not expose any of his weaknesses to his opponent. Dale Carnegie said some good words in this context: “No one, living, has enough emotion and vigour to fight the inevitable and, at the same time, enough left over to create a new life. Choose one or the other. You can either bend with the inevitable sleetstorms of life – or you can resist them and break. I saw that happen on a farm I had in Missouri. I planted a score of trees on that farm. At first, they grew with astonishing rapidity. Then a sleetstorm encrusted each twig and branch with a heavy coating of ice. Instead of bowing gracefully to their burden, these trees proudly resisted and broke and split under the load – and had to be destroyed. They had not learnt the wisdom of the trees in the North. I have travelled hundreds of miles through the evergreen forests of Canada. Yet I have never seen a spruce or a pine broken by sleet or ice. These evergreen forests know how to bend, how to bow down their branches, how to co-operate with the inevitable.

These words, as far as I am concerned, are the best interpretation of the tradition of the Prophet ﷺ who said: “The example of a believer is that of a fresh tender plant; from whatever direction the wind comes, it bends it, but when the wind becomes quiet, it becomes straight again. Similarly, a believer is afflicted with calamities (but remains patient till Allah removes his difficulties.) But the example of the a disbeliever is like that of a pine tree which keeps hard and straight till Allah cuts (breaks) it down when He wishes”¹.

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Abu Hurairah ﷺ.

This flexibility of facing up to the harsh world of reality may require that you look cheerful and prepare yourself to welcome it. Not that you ever wish for it to linger, but in order to reduce its sharpness and effects; Dale Carnegie added: "It is astonishing how quickly we can accept almost any situation – if we have to – and adjust ourselves to it and forget about it. William James said: 'Be willing to let it be so. Acceptance, of what has happened, is the first step to overcoming the consequences of any misfortune'. This acceptance is a good example of consolation; yet one should understand that it is not recommendable to seek the misfortunes of life, nor desire them.

Is there anyone who loves blindness? The Prophet ﷺ disliked it for himself, and asked Allah ﷻ to let him enjoy all his senses; in fact, every Muslim, or every human desires to live, all his life, with strong senses and feelings. However, some people might be tested with the loss of their sight; do we leave them as a victim to their pains and distress? No! There is the saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

"Allah said: 'If I deprive my slave of his two beloved things (i.e., his eyes) and he remains patient, I will let him enter Paradise in compensation for them'"¹.

This is a generous consolation by which a grieved person finds relief from his sorrows, and misfortunes. So, does this mean that blindness is a desired aim? Or that the pains of the world are of great importance to be sought after by people seeking forgiveness and paradise?

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Anas bin Malik ؓ.

The thinking of the Sufis has fallen in this trap, affecting the Muslim masses; therefore, it deluded their aims in this life, influencing their ideals by their struggle with misery and suffering.

The balanced lies in the linking of two, well distinguished and divided, circles: The circle of "the inevitable" and that of the "avoidable"; by balancing the feelings associated with each of them.

The truth is that each circle has its level of influence: If a man suffers a misfortune, yet possesses the ability to overcome it; then his acceptance of it is a sin. But, if he suffers a misfortune, while being unable to repel it, or knowing that it is beyond his ability, then he should be steadfast with it.

The "submission to fate" has become a disgrace in Islamic thinking, because people have misused it; so that they have justified poverty, lassitude and idleness. The prophet ﷺ has said:

"If you guard against the things which are forbidden; you will be the most devout of men; if you are pleased with what Allah has allotted; you will be the richest of men"¹;

and Dale Carnegie, similarly, explains about coping with fate in his words: "I have been reading practically every book and magazine article, I could find, that dealt, even remotely, with banishing worry... would you like to know what is the best, single bit of advice, about worry, that I have ever discovered in all that reading? Well, here

¹ Transmitted by Attirmidhi, on the authority of Abu Hurairah ؓ.

it is – summed up in twenty-seven words – words that you and I ought to paste on our mirror to read it every day – when we wash our faces, we could also wash away all our worries from our minds. This priceless advice or prayer was written by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr:

God, grant me the serenity,
To accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Then he said: “To break the worry habit, before it breaks you, the rule is: co-operate with the inevitable” or as the Prophet ﷺ has said: “Be pleased with what Allah has allotted; you will be the richest of men”.

I like to see Man facing life with a smile on his face, expressing his magnanimity, good morality and patience; a smile emphasizing his reliance on Allah ﷻ, to compensate for any loss, on the anticipated Day of meeting Him.

Sent Down with the Truth (The Revelation)

Islam organizes ideas in a particular manner, producing righteousness, and confirming the truth. This is in the intellectual field; as for the social field, Islam prepares one's feelings and emotions in a manner that generates virtue and consolidates brotherhood, or in a way that repudiates vice and dismisses immorality.

With all its teachings, Islam paves the way for people to the Right Path, and guides their hearts and souls to Truth and perfection.

For this reason, the Revelation was sent down, with all its warnings and good tidings; Allah ﷻ said:

«Thus does Allah make clear to you (His Law) lest you go astray. And Allah is the All-Knower of everything»¹

and He ﷻ also said:

«Thus Allah makes His Signs clear to you, that you may be guided»².

This guidance in the fields of reflection and thinking, and in the field of morality and conduct, is the result desired from the obligatory worship. The objective of these pious deeds is not just to implement them in a ceremonial manner, but rather to increase the sharpness of the

¹ Surat An-Nisa', verse 176.

² Surat Al-'Imran, verse 103.

intellect to perceive the Truth, aiming for the shortest path to it. It helps an individual to control his desires, and proceed in his course of life, away from all types of vice and injustice. Allah ﷻ has said:

«The mosques of Allah should only be frequented by those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day and establish Salat and pay Zakat, and fear no one but Allah. They are the ones most likely to be guided»¹.

Faith in Allah and the Last Day, and the obligations of Salat and Zakat, represent rays of light in the life of Man, to straighten his steps and inspire his senses; it enables him to constantly relate to the Truth, not to deny nor transgress it. The people who do not benefit from their relationship with Allah, through His generous Guidance, will receive no blessing in their Salat nor Zakat. This is the message of the expression with which the Verse concludes:

«They are the ones most likely to be guided»

it is as if these good deeds were not sufficient, except under certain conditions which require a great deal of awareness and effort.

Allah has prohibited all types of vice to His servants, because they block and debase the mind; spreading injustice among people; transforming into elements of idleness and darkness, or chaos and confusion, in the thoughts and feelings of people. Allah ﷻ said:

«All those who follow My Guidance will not go astray and will not be miserable. But if anyone

¹ Surat Tawbah, verse 18.

turns away from My Reminder, his life will be a dark and narrow one»¹

A Man who prefers a path of hypocrisy to a path of sincerity, exposes himself to more hardship and misery, just like a man who loses his way in Cairo trying to get to Alexandria; he will remain turning himself around to his last effort, without reaching his objective!

A man who prefers to indulge in adultery, rather than protect himself from it, is distressed like a wandering dog which hangs around trying to steal some food, but receives more knocks to its body than food in its mouth. These sins are not mere misfortunes to some people; they are also calamities which fill every corner of society with disgrace and misery.

The spreading of crime can be more destructive to the morale and spirit of a nation than the outcome of a vicious or malignant environment!

It is a requirement of Iman (Faith) that Man should recognize, within himself, those boundaries that should not be transgressed, and the landmarks where he should rest. In fact, it is not from the conduct of a Muslim to live without any principles, responding freely to any problem; because Iman requires correct rules and judgment; it provides a good response to any upcoming event in life, with regards to loss or benefit; defeat or victory; success or failure; friendship or enmity. Iman guides a Muslim to the right action in all these circumstances.

¹ Surat Ta-Ha, verse 123,124.

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Despite the nature of Iman, Allah ﷻ has set up other directives for people's guidance, in order that they do not deviate from the Right Path. These are the Commands, Prohibitions and advices of His Book (The Qur'an), which were conveyed to us by His Prophet ﷺ.

They are instructions which direct the conduct and behaviour of a Muslim to one particular course, and prevent him from being distracted.

Man has some natural tendencies which could either bring out the best or worst in him. These tendencies may overcome the individual, and plunge him into emotional turmoil, with no safe return; it is for this reason that ibn Al-Muqafa' said: "The faithful remains in good shape, as long as he does not stumble; but if he does, a pitfall will lie ahead of him". This stumbling represents weakness, in the will of a person, which could facilitate his downfall, by preventing cohesive thoughts and increasing anxiety.

Dale Carnegie recommends that is necessary to put a maximum limit on the level of anxiety that an individual might come across while pursuing those pitfalls.

Man is bound to make mistakes; so, he is not hoping for an infallible life. He suffers from the consequences of his mistakes, with disturbing results; therefore, the best he could do is to write off his worries and tragedies, without stumbling any more!

One should strive not to fall into deviation, and if one ever falls, one should strive harder not to sink deeper into it, so as to return to one's original position as soon as possible.

It is sensible to calm, and avoid misery, which could be caused by insisting on living a narrow-minded, stressful life.

Some people may suffer from brain damage, following a stroke after becoming enraged. This is not a sign of faith, or benevolence. Nor is it even a sign of great manhood.

Dale Carnegie said: "Once, during the Civil War, when some of Lincoln's friends were denouncing his bitter enemies, Lincoln said: 'You have more of a feeling of personal resentment than I have. Perhaps I have too little of it; but I never thought it paid. A man doesn't have time to spend half of his life in quarrels. If any man ceases to attack me, I never remember the past against him'"¹.

It is not possible, here, to enumerate all the texts forbidding rage and fury, and calling for kindness and gratitude, to seek the pleasure of Allah, preserving the purity of life. It is not beneficial to go along with our feelings of rage or gratification in revenge; our losses will be double that of our gains from these reckless outbursts. If we respond to the power of Iman (faith), it would then spare us many hardships, while we seek the pleasure of Allah ﷻ and implement His Commands.

¹ "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living" p.101.

It does not matter, here, that I mention the story of the famous Russian novelist and philosopher, Leo Tolstoy, and his dispute with his wife:

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, Tolstoy was, during the last twenty years of his life, 'probably the most venerated man in the whole world'. For twenty years before he died, an unending stream of admirers made pilgrimages to his home in order to catch a glimpse of his face, to hear the sound of his voice or even touch the hem of his garment. Every sentence he uttered was taken down in a notebook, almost as if it were a 'divine revelation'. But when it came to living – to ordinary living – well, Tolstoy had even less sense at seventy than Franklin had at seven! He had no sense at all.

Tolstoy married a girl he loved very dearly, and at the beginning they were very happy together. But the girl was jealous by nature. She used to dress herself up as a peasant and spy on his movements, even out in the woods. They had fearful rows; she became so jealous, even of her own daughters, that she grabbed a gun and shot a hole in her daughter's photograph!

And what did Tolstoy do? He kept a private diary in which he placed all the blame on his wife. He was determined to make sure that coming generations would exonerate him and put the blame on his wife. And what did his wife do, in answer to this? She tore pages out of his diary and burned them, of course. She started a diary of her own, in which she made him a villain. She even wrote a novel, entitled 'Whose Fault?', in which she

depicted her husband as a household fiend, and herself as a martyr.

All to what end? Why did these two people turn the only home they had into what Tolstoy himself called a 'lunatic asylum'? Obviously, there were several reasons. One of those reasons was their burning desire to impress you and me; the next generation! Yes, we are the posterity whose opinion they were worried about! Do we really care about whom was to blame? No, we are too concerned with our own problems to waste a minute thinking about the Tolstoys. What a price these two wretched people paid for their reactions towards each other. Fifty years of living in a veritable hell – just because neither of them had the sense to say: 'Stop!' Because neither of them had enough judgment of values to say, "Let's put a stop-loss order on this thing, instantly. We are squandering our lives. Let's say 'Enough now!'"¹.

The first impact of hypocrisy on its people is that it denies them the grace of stability and peace of mind! They sacrifice their personal benefits and urgent needs, in order to please the onlookers and those watching over them.

The actors in the theatres might get higher wages for the roles they are playing, and the comical and sad stories they are producing! But those hypocrites – who are like actors, outside the theatre – give away their money and their happiness, at a price, to please other people and gain their admiration. Those people might glance at their works, and comment on them in their articles and

¹ "How to Stop Worrying and Start Living" p.102, 103.

speeches, yet, deep in their minds, they are only concerned with their own needs and desires.

If the individual turns to his Lord, to seek inspiration and support from Him, alone, He would help him have every success in calming his nerves and overcoming his pains and worries.

One of the means of putting an end to Man's anxiety and distress is achieved when he compares between the good he possesses and the feeling of deprivation suffered by others; the Prophet ﷺ has said, in this context: "Look at those beneath you (who are less fortunate than you), and do not look at those in a higher, better position than you; it is more appropriate for you, so as not to disregard the blessing of Allah upon you".

It is very important to refer to the fact that Man hardly considers that there is an end to his life; whether he is in a desperate or a pleasing situation, he exaggerates his memory of such feelings, without ever thinking that one day he will have to part with them, if they do not part with him first!

I might have been inclined to consider death as a falsehood which should not worry me at all! Or have the tendency to get attached to an everlasting life! But what is to be done if death is real, even if its loud impact breaks the gathering and unity, to our dislike.

Should this truth not be mentioned? Its mentioning puts a definite end to all kinds of foolishness and self-deception.

The Prophet ﷺ was asked: "Who is the cleverest of all believers? He ﷺ said:

*'The one who remembers death most, and is better prepared for life after it'*¹

Anas bin Malik ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ passed by a gathering, while they were laughing, so he ﷺ said:

'If you were to keep death much in mind, which is the cutter-off of pleasures, it would distract you from what I see. Keep death much in remembrance which is the cutter-off of pleasure, for a day does not come to a grave without its saying, 'I am the house of exile, I am the house of solitude, I am the house of dust, I am the house of worms...'

The remembrance of death is not to devalue life, nor commit malicious acts; rather its purpose is to curb one's enthusiasm about materialism, and stop yourself from being deceived by it.

Once one's thinking has been straightened, one's comfort will not turn into chaos, nor simple anxiety into feeling trapped!

¹ Transmitted by Attabarani.

Do Not Cry Over the Past

It is said: "Nothing new under the sun"! This phrase has been rightly used during the course of human life, with its long history, in terms of its norms and desires, inter-relations and disputes, oppression and justice, peace and war, rise and decline of nations, and prosperity and disappearance

It is due to the resemblance of their activities on earth, and the inherited characteristics of their ancestors and successors, that Allah ﷻ has commanded His slaves to remember the events of the past, for their own benefit.

What concerned the predecessors, also concerns the last ones; what we face in our daily lives – to our great astonishment of its seriousness – has already occurred in past eras, even legislation has been drafted for it.

It is for our benefit to relate the past events, to our treatment of our present life; as Allah ﷻ has said:

«People of insight, take note!»¹.

The insight which emerges from the study of the past, is how to prevent the occurrence of mistakes. This is indeed a vision of faithful, endowed with sound judgment; Allah ﷻ has said:

«Have they not travelled about the earth and do they not have hearts to understand with or ears to

¹ Surat Al-Hashr, verse 2.

hear with? It is not their eyes which are blind but the hearts in their breasts which are blind»¹.

There are, in the Qur'an, many stories in which Allah ﷻ has eternalized the events of the ancient times, the destinies of both pious people and evil ones; the conflict between good and evil; and He ﷻ revealed this for us to reflect on it:

«There is instruction in their stories for people of intelligence. This is not a narration which has been invented but confirmation of all that came before; a clarification of everything, Guidance and Mercy, for people who have Iman»².

We should study the past only to seek a pure, abstract lesson. Islam dislikes and even objects those who look back to the near or far past just to renew their sorrows and hurt, saying: 'If only....' This was the talk of the hesitant and confused hypocrites, at the time of the Prophet ﷺ

«They are concealing things inside themselves which they do not disclose to you, saying: 'If we had only had a say in the affair, none of us would have been killed here in this place'. Say: 'Even if you had been inside your homes, those people, for whom (their) killing was decreed, would have gone out to their place of death»³.

¹ Surat Al-Hajj, verse 46.

² Surat Yusuf, verse 111.

³ Surat Al-'Imran, verse 154.

«They are those who said of their brothers, when they themselves had stayed behind, 'If they had only obeyed us, they would not have been killed'. Say: 'Then ward off death from yourselves if you are telling the truth'»¹.

These type of distressing regrets dominated people of weak faith, after the invasion of "Uhud"; the losses suffered by the people of Al-Madinah, after the assault of the Polytheists, had left deep, empty effect, and also opened up some gaps, in the resentful, towards Islam, to their satisfaction or slander. However, Allah ﷻ had revealed some detailed verses to treat the injuries, and round up the Muslims, following their calamity. So He ﷻ set their hopes on the future, and diverted their minds away from the past; He ﷻ rebuked them and prevented them from standing by the ruins of the past, wailing and lamenting themselves!

No, this is not a character of manhood, nor the logic of faith; we have to discover the essence of a mistake in order to avoid it in future, and look at past happenings, but only enough to learn from the experience, as Allah ﷻ has explained in the Qur'an; He ﷻ summarized the reason of the defeat:

«But then you faltered, disputing the command, and disobeyed after He showed you what you love»²,

¹ Surat Al-'Imran, verse 168.

² Surat Al-'Imran, verse 152.

«Those of you who turned their backs on the day the two armies clashed – it was Satan who made them slip for what they have done. But Allah has pardoned them»¹.

He ﷻ comforted them so as to reduce the effect of the pains they had suffered; for if pain could tie down our souls with strong chains, we would not notice anything.

What is the benefit of slapping one's cheeks nor tearing one's clothes for a lost chance or calamity? What is the value of a man thinking, with emotions, back to a forgotten event, only to add to more suffering to his pains and burning to his heart?

If our hands could stretch back to the past, to grab those hurtful events in order to change whatever displeased us about them, and turn to them to our liking, then the return to the past would have been a necessity, and we would all have rushed to do it, to erase all our regretful acts.

Since it is impossible to realize such a dream, it is to our benefit to put more effort in our future, so as to compensate for the past.

Man is not guilty for looking after his own benefits; but if these benefits are lost, for any particular reason, especially those which relate to deadlines or livelihood, then we ought to put our belief in Allah and His Divine Decree, as a refuge, to prevent us from sinking in illusion or other such foolish ways of thinking. The Qur'an has warned us against this; after the defeat of Uhud, it

¹ Surat Al-'Imran, verse 155.

addressed those who cry over those killed, who regretted setting out to the field of the battle; even if you had stayed in your homes, your life would not have been extended:

«Even if you had been inside your homes, those people for whom killing was decreed would have gone out to their place of death»¹

So why do we have these regrets, if destiny is inevitable?

An aircraft should crash land with, everyone on board, and destiny may uncover some burnt bodies, and also some unharmed young and adult people! So why do we not recognize the Divine Decree, over what has taken place?

Dale Carnegie resorted to his mind in order to take us to this objective; saying, "We may do something to modify the effects of what happened 180 seconds ago; but we can't possibly change the event that occurred then. There is only one way, on God's green footstool, that the past can be constructive; and that is by calmly analyzing our past mistakes and profiting by them – and then forgetting them. I know that is true; but have I always had the courage and sense to do it?"

Mr. Saunders told me that the teacher of his hygiene class, Dr. Paul Brandwine, taught him one of the most valuable lessons he had ever learned. "I was only in my teens", said Allen Saunders as he told me the story, "but I was a worrier even then. I used to stew and fret about the mistakes I had made. If I took an examination paper, I

¹ Surat Al-'Imran, verse 154.

used to lie awake and chew my fingernails for fear I hadn't passed. I was always living over the things I had done, and wishing I had done them differently; thinking over the things I had said, and wishing I'd said them better.

One morning, our class filed into the science laboratory, and there was the teacher, Dr. Paul Brandwine, with a bottle of milk prominently displayed on the edge of the desk. We all sat down, staring at the milk, wondering what it had to do with the hygiene course he was teaching. Then, all of a sudden, Dr. Paul Brandwine stood up, knocking the bottle of milk, with a crash, into the sink – and then shouted: "Don't cry over spilt milk!". He then made us all come to the sink to look at the damage. "Take a good look", he told us, "because I want you to remember this lesson the rest of your lives! That milk has gone – you can see it has gone down the drain; so all the fussing and hair-pulling in the world won't bring back a drop of it. With a little thought and care, that milk might have been saved. But it is too late now – all we can do is write it off, forget it, and go on to the next thing."

This is so, as shown by the Hadith:

"A strong believer is better and more loved by Allah than a weak believer; yet there is good in everyone, so cherish that which gives you benefit (in the Hereafter), seek help from Allah and do not lose heart; for if anything (in the form of trouble) comes to you, don't say: 'If I had not done that, it would not have happened like this', but say: 'Allah did what He had already ordained to do'. Your 'if' only opens the gate for Satan."

In this manner, we may wipe out the past, and carry on our activities with enthusiasm and hope.

This Life is What we Make of It

Man's happiness or misery, worries or serenity, is only to be realized from within himself.

He may neither view life as having delightful colours or being black and white; this is similar to the way water adopts the colour of its container; here the Prophet ﷺ said: "...and those who accept it gladly receive Allah's good pleasure, but those who are displeased receive Allah's displeasure".

He ﷺ visited an ill person who was suffering from fever, so he said to him, in a consoling manner: "Tahur (i.e., your illness will be a means of cleansing of your sins), if Allah Will". The man said: "It is rather a boiling fever, which is taking away the life of an old man!" so he ﷺ simply replied: "So it is then".

This shows how matters are subject to one's personal consideration; if one wants one could be pleased or displeased by someone or something. It is the mental attitude of the performer that determines the effect of a person on a particular activity.

Let us analyze the following verses, which depict some of the characteristics of certain people:

Among the desert Arabs, there are some who regard what they give as an imposition and are waiting for your fortunes to change. The evil turn

*of fortune will be theirs! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing*¹

*«And among the desert Arabs there are some who have Iman (faith) in Allah and the Last Day and regard what they give as something which will bring them nearer to Allah and to the prayers of the Messenger, it does indeed bring them near»*².

Both these groups of desert Arabs paid the required amount of money. The first group considered it to be a harmful, despicable fine, and wished distress for the people who collected it; while the second group regarded it as a beloved Zakat, to purify their wealth, so they made a virtuous supplication after they had paid it. All the matters of life do not go beyond this circle or range.

The value of work, or of its performer is strongly related to the reality of our thoughts, and the feelings governing our minds; Dale Carnegie said: "Our thoughts make us what we are. Our mental attitude is the X factor that determines our fate. Emerson said: "A man is what he thinks about all day long..." How could he possibly be anything else? I now know, with conviction beyond all doubt, that the biggest problem you and I have to deal with – in fact, almost the only problem we have to deal with – is choosing the right thoughts. If we can do that, we will be on the highroad to solving all our problems. The great philosopher who ruled the Roman Empire,

¹ Surat At-Tawbah, verse 98.

² Surat At-Tawbah, verse 99.

Marcus Aurelius, summed it up: 'Our life is what our thoughts make it'.

Yes, if we think happy thoughts, we will be happy. If we think miserable thoughts, we will be miserable. If we think fearful thoughts, we will be fearful. If we think sickly thoughts, we will be ill. If we think of failure, we will certainly fail, and so on".

No one can deny the huge effect that a good mentality has upon both individuals and groups. Those armies which are reputable and brave acquire their great strength from their firmness of faith and steadfastness, more than they do from their abundance of weapons and ammunition.

The strong morals and the exalted course of action is more beneficial to people and more rewarding of victory than anything else.

A man whose self-confidence increases is not hindered, during the course of his life, by a weakness in his body nor by distressful circumstances. Instead, these may even motivate him. It is true that an inferiority complex could be a blessing if it leads a person to perfection and glory.

Having an active mental state one could achieve far more, then the action of a single could change a nation. The future of Man depends on this – on people's mental capacity and quality of thought. Thus one's mind is the source of one's behaviour and direction, according to its thoughts and feelings.

When someone is raised high above the ground surface, the view changes as one can see more from a distance; yet the person remains the same.

Likewise, during the elevation of Man, on the road to cultural progress and moral perfection, he changes many of his thought and feelings, and alters many of his judgments regarding various people and subject matters. Indeed, an individual, as a child, is not the same by the time he becomes a man; and from the period of his youthfulness until his old age, he undergoes further changes.

We have the ability to make ourselves great examples, if we make the effort. We only have to renew our thoughts and feelings, the way an area of the desert may change when rainwater falls on it.

We could change into different people, the way this deserted spot changes into a colourful garden!

Dale Carnegie narrated a story about a young man who was suffering a severe breakdown, so he decided to take a trip to Florida, but this was during the height of the tourist season. His father, who knew about his health and his mental suffering, handed him a letter before he stepped on the train, and asked to open it only after he reached Florida. The letter said: "Son, you are 1500 miles from home, but you don't feel any different, do you? I knew you wouldn't, because you took with you the one thing that is the cause of all your trouble, that is, yourself. There is nothing wrong with either your body or your mind. It is not the situations you have met that

have thrown you; it is what you think of these situations. 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is.' When you realize that, son, come home; for you will be cured."!

"Dad's letter made me angry. I was looking for sympathy, not instruction. I was so mad that I decided, then and there, that I would never go home! That night as I was walking down one of the side streets of Miami, I came to a church where services were going on. Having no place to go, I drifted in and listened to a sermon on the text: 'He who conquers his spirit is mightier than he who taketh a city.' Sitting in the sanctity of the House of God and hearing the same thoughts that my Dad had written in his letter – all this swept the accumulated litter out of my brain. I was able to think clearly and sensibly for the first time of my life. I realized what a fool I had been. I was shocked to see myself in my true light: here I was, wanting to change the whole world and everyone in it – when the only thing that needed changing was the focus of 'the lens of the camera', which was my mind."

I have written similar notes (to those of Carnegie) in my book, "The Ethics of the Muslim", in which I upheld this great reality, saying: "Islam – like all divine messages – relies above all, on its general reformation, refining the human mind; it concentrates on penetrating deep inside it, planting its teachings there."

The messages of the prophets became permanent and attracted many believers, only because they made "the human mind" the object to be reformed; their instructions were not just some loose formalities in the course of an active life. They have conveyed their principles to suit

our minds, and so they became the dominant force of morality over the temptations of human nature, and gave us our direction in life.

Divine messages are concerned with society and its conditions, and various types of judgment; they provide the solutions and cures for any defect that may take place, in all its different aspects; however, they never went beyond their nature in realizing that a good human mind is the most important start for any reform, for good morals are a lasting guaranty for any civilization. There is neither contempt nor aversion in the manner of work of those who strive to build their society and state; it is rather a glorification of the value of mental reform, in safeguarding life and bringing joy to the living.

A deficient mind can bring about disorder; as for a noble mind, it fills the gaps in desperate situations, in the middle of chaos and turmoil.

A righteous judge fulfills the law, by which he is judging, by his justice; but an oppressive judge tries to twist the proper laws. All humans behave similarly when they are involved in global movements and ideologies, or their own desires and interests.

Therefore, improving one's mentality remains the principle way of allowing good prevail in this life; if people's minds are not corrected and improved, then their future will be bleak, and trials will predominate; Allah ﷻ has said:

«Verily, Allah will not change the (good) condition of a people as long as they do not change their state (of goodness) themselves. But when Allah wills a people's punishment, there can be no turning back from it, and they will find, besides Him, no protector»¹

He ﷻ also said, giving the cause of the destruction of previous nations:

«Similar to the behaviour of the people of Pharaoh, and those before them. They rejected the Signs of Allah, so Allah punished them for their sins. Verily, Allah is All-Strong, Severe in punishment. That is so because Allah will never change a grace which He has bestowed on a people until they change what is in their own selves»²

Allah ﷻ wants to show us the clear relationship between the purity of intentions and circumstances of the living. He ﷻ confirmed that His general blessing descends as peace and clemency on the believers; when He said:

«And if the people of the towns had believed and had piety, certainly, We would have granted to them blessings from the heaven and the earth»³

¹ Surat Ar-Ra'd, verse 11.

² Surat Al-Anfal, verse 52, 53.

³ Surat Al-A'raf, verse 96.

our minds, and so they became the dominant force of morality over the temptations of human nature, and gave us our direction in life.

Divine messages are concerned with society and its conditions, and various types of judgment; they provide the solutions and cures for any defect that may take place, in all its different aspects; however, they never went beyond their nature in realizing that a good human mind is the most important start for any reform, for good morals are a lasting guaranty for any civilization. There is neither contempt nor aversion in the manner of work of those who strive to build their society and state; it is rather a glorification of the value of mental reform, in safeguarding life and bringing joy to the living.

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and He ﷺ also mentioned that He had afflicted defeat and disgrace on the aggressors:

«...those who come out of their homes boastfully and to be seen of men, and hinder (men) from the Path of Allah»

After He ﷺ inflicted punishment on them, He ﷺ gave them hope of a more dignified future; however this dignity depends on the change made in their hearts, and their change from being boastful and superior to modest, compassionate and justice; He ﷺ said:

«O Prophet! Say to the captives that are in your hands: "If Allah knows any good in your hearts, He will give you something better than what has been taken from you, and He will forgive you, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"»¹.

The initial Islamic education had undertaken a deep study of people's mentality and emotions, with the objective of achieving peace from within oneself, not via external influences – encouraging an individual to aspire, using the ability of his mind, to prosperity, success and good fortune. One may manage to elevate oneself to that particular standard, after much effort, dedication and true sincerity. Then, once the followers of this spiritual path attain this highest point, they would say: "We are enjoying a life to a level of which kings would have fought us to attain, if they had been aware of it".

¹ Surat Al-Anfal, verse 70.

Nevertheless, these types of mental exercises have been inflicted by extremism, which has ridiculed its results, leading to some serious or critical deviations. Indeed, the first Muslim Sufis restricted their belief within the scope of their imaginations or conceptions, and exceeded the proper bounds with their personal results, through which they tried to look at the facts of the universe, life and nature. They strayed from the Right Path and led others astray...

The difference between the Islamic Sufism and the American one comes clear in a story related by Dale Carnegie about Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of "Christian Science":

"Until this time, she had known little in life except sickness, sorrow, and tragedy. Her first husband had died shortly after their marriage. Her second husband had deserted her and eloped with a married woman. He later died in a poorhouse. She had only one child, a son; and she was forced, because of poverty, illness and jealousy, to give him up when he was four years old. She lost all track of him and never saw him again for thirty one years. Because of her own ill-health, Mrs. Eddy had been interested for years in what she called "the science of mind healing". But the dramatic turning point in her life occurred in Lynn, Massachusetts. Walking downtown one cold day, she slipped and fell on the icy pavement – and was knocked unconscious. Her spine was so injured that she convulsed with spasms. Even the doctor expected her to die. If by some miracle she lived, he declared that she would never walk again.

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Lying on what was supposed to be her deathbed, Mary Baker Eddy opened her Bible, and was led, she declared, by divine guidance to read these words from Saint Matthew: "And, behold, they brought to him (i.e. Jesus ^{عليه السلام}) a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus ...said unto the sick of the palsy: ...Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose and departed to his house." These had produced within her such a strength, such a faith, such a surge of healing power, that she "immediately got out of bed and walked"; and that experience paved the way for "the paralyzed woman" to cure herself and how to make others do so...

And such was the way in which she became the founder and "high priestess" of a new religion: Christian Science – the only great religious faith ever established by a woman – a religion that has encircled the globe!"

We may tend to believe this story, we may also believe the miracles related in the newspapers about destitute Indians; for high-aspiring mental powers do wonders. But, whoever may scorn this matter has to know that the approval of such stories neither relates to faith nor disbelief; we aim to highlight the fact that all these events should be considered as definite individual cases; therefore, no one should generalize them. The Americans involved in the above story exceeded their personal boundaries, yet they never tried to apply it to Atomic energy plants nor other areas of productivity.

As for what has taken place in our countries for centuries, it is totally the opposite; mental marvels have turned into an epidemic that has spread throughout the towns and

villages. Everyday, stories "assign" a miracle to a pious man or a vicious man; and the circle of myths extends to other fields, such as trade, industry, science and research activities. It has even been transferred to the fields of war and politics; indeed, when Al-Khiddiwi Isma'il fought against the Ethiopians, and considered that his invasion was unsuccessful, he ordered the scholars of Al-Azhar to gather in his courtyard to read "Sahih Al-Bukhari"!

It is as if the recitation of all the Qur'an and the Sunnah could prevent a defeat, by the enemies, because of their poor planning and preparation!

The story of a woman who recited some lines from Chapter "Mathew" of the Bible, and was subsequently cured, should not turn into an obsession about the way it happened to people like her in our country, where these personal (psychological) miracles have become a comprehensive assault on the facts of life and the universe!

James Allen said: "Let a man radically alter his thoughts, and he would be astonished by the rapid transformation it would cause in the material conditions of his life. The Divinity that shapes our ends is (by making positive changes) in ourselves. It is (through) our very self... All that a man achieves is as a direct result of his own thoughts...A man may only rise, conquer and achieve by lifting up his thoughts. He may only remain weak, abject and miserable by refusing to lift up his thoughts".

The High Cost of Getting Even

When an individual feels well within himself, being in control of his faculties, and feels calm before any problems, knowing their inability to harm him, and his ability to overcome them, it makes him cool-headed when insulted, and less irritated when mistreated! Yet in general, the nature of Man changes, so he may become furious, later, as his patience fails him. In the same manner an enemy may storm a country which finally declares its surrender, yet when he realizes that this enemy was vainly trying to provoke him, then his reassurance and overconfidence help him to receive a few blows calmly, cheerfully or even with laughter!

There are two narrations which confirm this fact: one by Dale Carnegie, and the other from my book "The Ethics of the Muslim"; each narration confirms the other. Carnegie said: "I sat one night in a camp with other tourists on 'bleachers', facing a dense growth of pine and spruce. Presently, the animal which we had been waiting to see, the terror of the forest, the grizzly bear, strode out into the glare of the lights and began devouring the garbage that had been dumped there from the kitchen of one of the park hotels. A forest ranger, Major Martindale, sat on a horse and talked to the excited tourists about bears. He told us that the grizzly bear can whip any other animal in the western world, with the possible exception of the buffalo and the Kodiak bear; yet, I noticed that night that there was one animal, and only one, that the grizzly permitted to come out of the forest and eat with

him under the glare of the lights: a skunk. The grizzly knew that he could liquidate a skunk with one swipe of his mighty paw. Why didn't he do it? Because he had found from experience that it did not pay.

I found that out too. As a farm boy, I trapped four-legged skunks along the hedgerows in Missouri; and as a man, I encountered a few two-legged skunks on the sidewalks of New York. I have found from sad experience that it does not pay to stir up either variety".

That was what Dale Carnegie had written in his book "How to Stop Worrying...", and I agreed with his way of thinking, in my book: "The Ethics of the Muslim", saying: "Old habits of the mind have a strong impact on people's attitude of firmness or calmness, hastiness or slowness, dirtiness or purity. However, there is a strong relation between the individual's self confidence, his lamentation over others, and his overseeing of their mistakes. Truly, whenever the great man moves in morally high circles, he would become more patient and wiser, forgiving people, and seeking excuses for their errors. We have seen how some people can become very enraged when they feel intimidated, or despised by others that they hope to take vengeance to defend their honour.

Any individual is living behind the "high walls" of morality, would not feel such pain. For insults and abuses return the senders before they reach the abused. This meaning explains the patience and insight of Prophet Hud عليه السلام as he listened to the answer of his people, after he called them to worship Allah ﷻ alone, they said:

«Verily, we see you in foolishness, and verily, we think you are one of the liars. Hud said: "O my people! There is no foolishness in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the mankind. I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord, and I am a trustworthy adviser for you»¹.

Through insight, Hud ؑ was not affected by the abuses of those ignorant one's. This is because there is a great difference between a man selected and appointed by Allah, as a Messenger – who lives in virtue and righteousness – and a people who made a fool of themselves by worshipping stone idols – believing that stones could bring harm or benefit!

The following are some examples of some personalities who do not react to abuse, and do not get provoked by an ignorant remark:

It was narrated that a man insulted Al-Ahnaf bin Qais – as he walked along side him on the road – and when he approached his home, Qais stopped and said: "Man, if you have anything else to say, say it now; I fear the youths of my area might hear you and harm you."

A man said to Abu Dharr: "It is you who was exiled from Ash-Sham (Syria) by Mu'awiyah. If there was any good in you, he would not have expelled you". Abu Dharr replied: "O brother, behind me there is an insurmountable obstacle, if I survive it, I would not be hurt with your

¹ Surat Al-A'raf, verse 66-68.

remark, and if I do not survive it, then I am worse than what you said".

A man said to Abu Bakr ؓ: "By Allah, I will insult you with a curse that will go into the grave with you!! He ؓ replied: 'It will enter with you (in your grave) not with me!'.

A man insulted Imam Asha'bi, so he replied: "If you are truthful, Allah will forgive me, and if I was lying, Allah will forgive you".

Jesus ؑ passed by some Jewish people; they abused him, yet he said well to them. Then it was said to him: 'But they abuse you, and you reply well to them?' So he said: 'Everyone spends from what he owns'".

Qais bin 'Asim was asked: "What is clemency? He replied: 'that you visit such people who broke away from you, give to a person who deprived you, and forgive the one who wronged you'".

Al-Hassan ؓ said: "The believer is gentle and patient; he does not become enraged even when people enrage at him", then he recited:

*«And who, when the ignorant speak to them, say:
'Peace»¹.*

Yazeed bin Habib said: "My anger was rather by my shoes... when I hear something unpleasant, I would grab them and leave..."

¹ Surat Al-Furqan, verse 63.

Ali ؑ said: "Whoever's word was gentle, should be loved, and remember that your patience, with regards to the foolish or the insolent, increases your (number of) allies".

A man said something unpleasant to 'Umar bin Abdelaziz ؑ, to which he replied: "Never mind! You only intended that I should be provoked by Satan, using the power of my rule to harm you, today, so you expect to gain retribution on the Day of Reckoning! You may leave if you want..."

Resentment is like venom circulating in the minds, the way the blood flows through the body. This could produce nervousness or worries, then the intensity may also rise and even destroy the person. For this reason, Dale Carnegie thinks that clemency with one's enemies is a blessing that reaches the mind before other people notice your goodness. He reported a paragraph about a bulletin issued by the Police Department of Milwaukee: "If selfish people try to take advantage of you, cross them off your list, but don't try to get even. When you try to get even, you hurt yourself more than you hurt the other fellow". Then he asked: "How will trying to get even hurt you? In many ways, according to 'Life' magazine, it may even wreck your health. The chief personality characteristic of persons with 'Hypertension' (high blood pressure) is resentment."

Then Carnegie added: "A friend of mine recently had a serious heart attack. Her physician put her to bed and ordered her to refuse to get angry about anything, no

matter what happened. Physicians know that if you have a weak heart, a fit of anger can kill you."

To protect Man from outbursts of fury, and the resulting physical and mental effects, the Prophet ﷺ said:

*"Three things, whoever has them, Allah will place him under His Protection, cover him with His Blessings, and accept him in His Love: he who thanks people when offered something, who forgives when he possesses the power, and suppresses anger when in a position to give vent to it"*¹.

The Prophet ﷺ also said:

*"He who suppresses his anger, Allah will withhold a due punishment from him; and he who observes his tongue, Allah will cover over one of his weaknesses or deficiencies"*².

'Umar ؑ said: "The Prophet ﷺ said:

'There is no better 'morsel' to Allah than that of anger which was suppressed for the sake of Allah.'"³

It is clear that when the level of anger increases in the mind of an individual, he surrenders his conscience to the Devil; he loses his sense of reason, as worries take over his feelings and rationality, so he no longer acknowledges or accepts any advice, even if it should be of the Divine Words of Allah ﷻ or the wisdom of the Prophet ﷺ.

¹ Transmitted by Al-Hakim.

² Transmitted by Attabarani.

³ Transmitted by Ibn Maajah.

Sulayman bin Surd narrated: "While I was sitting in the company of the Prophet, two men abused each other and the face of one of them became red with anger, and his jugular veins swelled (i.e. he became furious). On that the Prophet said: "I know a word, the saying of which will cause him to relax, if he says it, which is: 'I seek Refuge with Allah from Satan.' then all his anger will go away." Somebody said to him: "The Prophet has said: 'Seek refuge with Allah from Satan'." The angry man said: 'Am I mad?'¹. Anger has taken over the heart of a man to such an extent that he even disregarded the guidance of the Prophet ﷺ.

The secret of 'seeking refuge with Allah from Satan' is that anger prepares the mind to accept all kind of devilish temptations and thus to commit any crime, so when he comes to his senses, he regrets all his foolish acts, with resentment and fury.

Dale Carnegie said: "So you see that when Jesus said: 'Love your enemies', he was not just preaching sound ethics. He was also preaching twentieth-century medicine. When he said: 'Forgive seventy times seven' Jesus was telling you and me how to keep ourselves from having high blood pressure, heart trouble, stomach ulcers, and many other ailments.

The story of forgiving the miss-haps more than seventy times was narrated in the Chapter of Mathew, as well as in the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. Abdullah bin 'Amru reported that a man came to the Prophet ﷺ and said:

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari.

'Messenger of Allah! How often shall I forgive a servant? He gave no reply, so the man repeated what he had said, but he still kept silent. When he asked a third time, he replied: Forgive him seventy times, daily.'

As for loving one's enemies¹, it perhaps means wishing forgiveness for them, and purifying one's heart from any rancour towards them. It means forgetting about all their past misdeeds, because this only leads to rekindling former hatred.

It is impossible to have the same feelings for a beneficent person as well as for an oppressor. The righteous son of Adam ~~عليه السلام~~ had natural feelings, and was reasonable and just to have hated his killer brother, and also hoped for chastisement to befall him; he said:

«Verily, I intend to let you draw my sin on yourself as well as yours, then you will be one the dwellers of Fire, and that is the recompense of the wrong-doers»².

Nevertheless, a believer has a great heart, and should not harbour any hatred. Not at all; resentment remains something strange to such a heart, fading away as it approaches it. Furthermore, a believer is always preoccupied with his future life in the Hereafter, preparing for it in this world; therefore, he does not devote his time to quarrels, because such is the activity of

¹ Antagonists, opponents – the context does not refer to disbelievers.

² Surat Al-Ma'idah, verse 29.

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² Surat Al-Ma'idah, verse 29.

people who spend their time exclusively in disputes and controversies.

The Arabs in the pre-Islamic era were living a similar life, until the Revelation was sent down:

«O you who believe! Enter perfectly in Islam (by obeying all the rules and regulations of the Islamic religion) and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Verily, he is to you a plain enemy»¹

so Allah ﷻ brought the truth to them and let them be occupied with it, instead of arguing with each other.

This pre-Islamic habit has returned to those idle masses within our nations; they waste their time in unending disputes, because they do not carry a message worth living for, so as to be occupied with its rights!

There is well established similarity of customs among great personalities, despite the diversity of their languages and cultures, because the roots of their loftiness develop in character during their young age, and become stronger with age. These are characteristics which Allah ﷻ instils in selected people so they may perform well during their lives and perform great tasks. People who possess strong intellectual faculties may provide strong and reliable leadership for nations. It is for this reason the Prophet ﷺ made a supplication – during the time when Islam seemed strange – by asking Allah ﷻ to honour Islam with one of the ‘Umars: ‘Umar

¹ Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 208.

bin Al-Khattab or ‘Amru bin Hisham. The first one was preferred and more fortunate to Allah.

When a delegation from the tribe of Abdulqais came to Al-Madinah, the Prophet ﷺ said to their leader, Al-Ashaj: “You possess two characteristics which Allah and His Messenger are endeared to: forbearance and intelligence”. It was narrated that the man said to the Prophet ﷺ: “Were these characteristics given to me by Allah, or they were simply found in me?” It is Allah who instilled them in you”; so the man was extremely pleased with that generous gift. His personality – even in the darkness of the pre-Islamic era – was glittering with some of the attributes loved by Allah ﷻ.

I read some articles, reported by Dale Carnegie, about the life of Abraham Lincoln, the great American president, and came across the moral status that Allah ﷻ grants certain people, to make them shine within their social environment with nobility and virtue. Nevertheless, this man (Lincoln) did not escape from the conspiracies of some people below him, as Carnegie has said: “Probably no other man in American history was ever more denounced, hated and double-crossed than Lincoln. Yet, according to Herndon’s classic biography, he ‘never judged men by his like or dislike for them. If a man had maligned him or been guilty of personal ill-treatment, yet was the fittest man for the position, Lincoln would give him that position, just as easily as he would give it to a friend...I do not think he ever removed a man because he was his enemy or because he disliked him.’

Lincoln was denounced and insulted by some of the very men he appointed to positions of authority. Yet Lincoln believed, according to Herndon, his law partner, that 'No man was to be eulogised for what he did; or censured for what he did or did not do, because all of us are the subjected to our conditions, circumstances, environment, education, acquired habits and heredity; moulding men as they are and will forever be'.

Perhaps Lincoln was right; if you and I had inherited the same physical, mental, and emotional characteristics as our enemies, and if life had done to us what it has done to them, we would probably act exactly as they do, and would not be able to do much else.

Clarence Ward used to say: 'Instead of hating our enemies, let's pity them and thank God that He has not made us what they are. Instead of heaping condemnation and revenge upon our enemies, let's give them our understanding, sympathy, help, and forgiveness...'

These words, which may help to mature many great minds, remind us of the position of one the great Muslim scholars: The government of his time tried to force him to approve of one of its particular religious opinions, but he refused to follow their false doctrine. So the authorities decided to use all kinds of tortures, and long imprisonment, in order to him to submit to their opinion, yet the man showed great steadfastness during his trial and continued to refuse to surrender his faith for the deviation of the innovators, and the suppression of the oppressors. When they had lost all hope of convincing

him, and felt that his time was closer, they returned him to his house.

Ibn Kathir said: 'The doctors visited the tortured man and gave him the necessary treatment until he recovered with the Help of Allah ﷻ.'

So, what was his position after this?

He was able to forgive anyone who harmed him, except the heretics; and he used to recite:

«They should rather pardon and overlook. Would you not love Allah to forgive you»¹

He would say: "What benefit do you achieve by having your Muslim brother tortured; while Allah ﷻ has said:

«But if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah»²

That caller will shout on the Day of Resurrection: 'Anyone with a reward due from Allah, rise'. But none rise, except those who use to forgive. The Prophet ﷺ has said: "When Allah gathers His creatures (on the Day of Judgment), a caller asks: Where are the people of merit?' He ﷺ said: 'Then few people rise and head quickly towards Paradise. They are met by the Angels who ask them: 'What is your merit?' They reply: 'We used to show steadfastness when we suffered an injustice, and

¹ Surat An-Nur, verse 22.

² Surat Ashuraa, verse 40.

more understanding when wrongly treated'. So the Angels will say: 'Enter Paradise, blessed is your reward'".

These are the attributes of forbearance and forgiveness, confirmed by history, of the people who displayed them, in all parts of the world. But how few they are, compared to the population of the world.

Do Not Seek Gratitude From Anyone!

Despite the fact that the blessings of Allah reach us, through every breath of air that fills our chest, and in every pulse of blood flowing in our veins, we hardly perceive such abundant grace, nor consider all this is due to the Creator, Allah ﷻ.

We simply expect that everything should be spontaneously ready to serve us, and that all elements of existence should respond to our gestures and wishes, only because we desire something, and that the universe should respond to our command, in the manner of spoiled children!

We may sometimes have a feeling of gratitude, in certain circumstances, or of courtesy, in a comfortable and pleasing environment; yet it remains an incomplete feeling because we do not relate this to Allah, being unaware of His Blessings upon us! Not many people possess this feeling; just a few, who are not even remembered at all.

As for the masses, they are oblivious of any grace; they enjoy the blessings of Allah, yet are unaware of their abundance, and are unthankful to the Provider. Allah wanted to draw the attention of people to His piety, around them, and the traces of His Omnipotence and Mercy surrounding them; He ﷻ said – as if introducing Himself to His creatures –

«Allah is He who appointed the night for you so that you might rest in it, and the day for seeing. Allah pours out His Favour on mankind but most people do not show thanks. That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of everything. There is no god but Him – so how have you been perverted? That is how those who deny Allah's Signs have been perverted. It is Allah who made the earth a stable home for you and the sky a dome, and formed you, giving you the best of forms, and provided you with good and wholesome things. That is Allah, your Lord. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of all the worlds»¹.

Have we, after this statement and warning, fulfilled the Right of Allah?

It is clear that thanking the Benefactor is a heavy obligation, and that we tend to neglect and forget the extent of our needs and desires. Many people even devour the graces of Allah, as if retaking a right withheld from them, or some property special to them; therefore, they do not have any gratitude towards anyone!

With their ungrateful thinking, no good deed is well appreciated, nor do they thank anyone for it.

No matter what efforts you make for some people, all you get, in return, is a cold and rigid look. So much for their

¹ Surat Ghafir, verses 61-64.

behaviour, yet they have behaved similarly with your and their Lord; He ﷻ said:

«But very few of my servants are thankful»¹.

Dale Carnegie gave us some examples of the spread of ingratitude among people, when he said: "If you had saved a man's life, would you expect him to be grateful? You might – but Samuel Leibowitz, who was a famous criminal lawyer, before he became a judge, saved seventy eight men from going to the electric chair! How many of these men, do you suppose, stopped to thank him? None! Jesus ﷺ helped ten lepers in one afternoon – but how many of those lepers even stopped to thank him? Only one; as for the others, they had all run away without saying a word.

Charles Schwab told me that he had once saved a bank cashier who had speculated in the stock market, with funds belonging to the bank. Schwab put up the money to save this man from going to the penitentiary. Was the cashier grateful? Oh, yes, for a little while. Then he turned against Schwab, reviling and denouncing him – the very man who had kept him out of jail!"

Then Carnegie added, as if explaining the word of Allah ﷻ:

«Truly man is ungrateful to his Lord»²

¹ Surat Saba', verse 13.

² Surat Al-'Adiyat, verse 6.

"Ingratitude is natural – like weeds. Gratitude is like a rose. It has to be fed and watered, cultivated and loved, and protected. That's how it goes; human nature has always been human nature, and it probably won't change in your lifetime. So why not accept it? It is natural for people to forget to be grateful; so if we go around expecting gratitude, we will be heading straight for a lot of heartaches."

These words need some commentary and explanation; for it is very grave and damaging for people's minds to be void of the gracefulness of gratitude. We have to raise people's awareness of the importance of being grateful, and the degree of benevolence, compassion and piety it may generate in their lives.

Islam guides a receiver to remember the blessing he receives, praising the sender, and rewarding the sender for it by any means. If there is no equivalent in material terms, then he should give thanks with appropriate words, asking Allah ﷻ to reward those who spread those feelings of gratitude in our hearts, and to help us achieve what our hands were unable to achieve.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

*"Whoever comes to you with beneficence, reward him; and if you are unable to reward him, then make a supplication for him until you know that you have rewarded him; for Allah is Thankful and He loves the thankful"*¹.

¹ Transmitted by Attabarani.

He ﷺ also said:

"The most grateful people to Allah ﷻ are the most thankful to people"

and he ﷺ said:

*"He who is not grateful to Allah, does not thank people"*¹.

He ﷺ also said:

"He who does not thank for little, does not thank for plenty; and he who does not thank people, does not thank Allah. Talking about the blessings of Allah is gratefulness, and abstention from it is ungratefulness. A community is a blessing, but division is torment".

The blessing of a community is related to what was quoted before; indeed its separation and break up is often the outcome of ungratefulness; nothing strengthens the bonds of groups more than observing beneficence and being generous to people.

Nevertheless, even though Islam insists on the observance of gratefulness and reviling of ungrateful people, it suggests that people should make their beneficent acts solely for the sake of Allah, removing anything else from their intentions, since a corrupted intention perverts the purity of an act and will fail to achieve a proper reward. The beneficence which is accepted and respected is the one made with a sincere intention, responding to the Command of Allah and seeking His Forgiveness and His Pleasure, not expecting gratefulness from people!

¹ Transmitted by Ahmad.

When Islam enjoins faithfulness upon people in their work, it liberates their hearts from the chains of their own desires, and retains their hope in achieving absolute perfection. Their good deeds are founded upon pure intentions, and a love and desire to achieve them without expecting praises from people, nor for any status among them. This pure state of loftiness is the manifestation of a true beneficence, and is the highest level for any generous human being.

It is this attachment to absolute perfection and pure beneficence that Islam requires from you when you offer kindness to people, and do not expect any praise from anyone; as one of those described by Allah:

«They give food, despite their love for it, to the poor and orphans and captives: 'We feed you only out of desire for the Face of Allah. We do not want any repayment from you or any thanks'»¹.

It does not mean that they actually utter those words; that is unlikely to happen because it would hurt the people in need. Those words – in the verse – rather, reflect the pure intentions and feelings in their hearts.

Is the desire for the Face of Allah too hard for people? It is sad that most people are driven, in their activities, by mixed incentives, seeking many objectives; and only few of them act with a pure motive, with the intention to achieve higher goals in the Hereafter!

¹ Surat Al-Insan, verses 8-9.

People who desire praise and fame do not hesitate to commit major sins... It is no wonder that Islam persists on purifying the heart; calling for sincere intentions, to desire the Face of Allah in every matter, and calling for the purification of all activities, from any intricacy which may ruin the intention. The Prophet ﷺ conveyed the Hadith: "Allah ﷻ said: 'I am the Best of Partners; so whoever has associated a partner with Me, then he is for that partner'. O people, be sincere in your activities, for Allah accepts only that which is sincerely for him." The Prophet ﷺ also said: "Do not say: 'This is for Allah and for kinship'; for it is purely for your kinship and not for Allah".

This is true, when you say: 'I do this for the sake of Allah, and for the sake of such and such a person'. So, it is most likely for that dear person, and Allah ﷻ has no share in it; and if He ﷻ ever has a share in that particular deed, He would reject it, because He ﷻ accepts only deeds that are sincerely made for His Sake, alone.

Therefore, it is an obligation upon us to guide the actions of our hearts and our hands to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, not expecting any praise, admiration, fame, or thanks.

Following my personal experience with people, I find myself compelled to say: "Be sincere in your work for Allah, seek his reward, and do not wait for any thanks from people; instead, expect them to criticize you, and even hate you; and that they would be suspicious of you, and forget any of your merits!"

It seems to me that enmity will always exist between distinguished people and miserable ones, between skillful people and deprived ones, and finally between the people to whom we offer our beneficence and those who want us to be in a particular place so they may enjoy our beneficence.

There is always an incurable ingratitude present in the characteristics of a certain people within a group, yet I do not know whether those people form the majority, or the minority, for they destroy the untroubled state of life, the way the pureness of water is corrupted by a pinch of salt.

Whatever it is, the complaint from this 'plague' is both old and contemporary. Imam Malik bin Anas ؓ used to complain about the lack of just treatment in his time – the time of Tabi'in (the Followers who were after the time of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ), and centuries later, Attaghra'i complained about the same issue. As for myself (the author), when I turn around me and notice the compensation I have received from people, I feel a great deal of torment and agony. So I would like to highlight some issues which should be mentioned regarding some of the publications, by some people, in order to clarify the truth:

I have been writing about Islam and giving lectures for the past eighteen years, and the group within which I have lived knows this fact. My lectures were not the outcome of a skillful lecturer giving useless talks, and my writings were not the result of an influential, yet uncontrolled writer. Rather, they were produced by feelings, overwhelmed by sincerity, and a way of

thinking that seeks the core of the truth, and rushes to declare it.

I have singled myself out, with a particular style, in explaining the teachings of Islam, and attacking all the economical, social and political corruption – in its name – and no one has joined me in this matter, for a long time.

Then some unwise trials erupted and ended in my expulsion from the group; it is an expulsion which I consider to be the result of some personal grudges, while others see it as a logical decision. So be it! Man sometimes strays away from rightness when he judges his personal affairs. Who knows? Maybe my opponents can be forgiven for wrong-doing me – I mean getting rid of me. So I have to accept what has happened, and ignore all I imagine to be breach of faith and injustice!

However, there is an attempt to attack me and destroy me (my reputation), which I should repel harshly, and expose its vileness. It is an attempt to attack my literary heritage. I would not mind being hated by anyone! As for 'stealing' my writings, publishing them under a different name, and making people believe that I am the one who copied that from others; it is a crime of which I accept no part.

But why has this revolutionary anger overcome me in such manner? Should this subject not have been closed and forgotten?

I said to my self: "Would you not learn sincere devotion and faithfulness to Allah from the way of Imam Shafi'i ؓ, who filled the world with his knowledge, and yet he

said: 'I wish this knowledge would have spread without people knowing its owner'. If I forget the fact that people know about my initial writings and that I was prominent in such and such a matter, it would not hurt someone who wrote to seek the Face of Allah; it would rather help him by correcting his intention and his course of action!

But I said to myself: "But those people all cooperated to expel me from your position, and aimed to expose me like an oppressor over others. So how could they listen to my lectures and read my writings, then unduly ascribe them to themselves, making me, in the eyes of people, a mere copyist and imitator?"

I reply to myself: "You are still attached to creatures, and overlooking the Creator".

Finally, I decided to close this chapter, asking Allah ﷻ to forgive me, and all those who treated me unjustly, and despised me.

Would You Take a Million Dollars for What You Have?

Numerous are the blessings before us, yet we are unaware of them!

Is it of little importance that Man walks out lifting his arms up high, walking with confident steps, filling his chest with air, breathing deeply, extending his eyes to the horizons of this world to see the light, and listening with his ears to all the motions of life and the living?

This well-being and vitality, which enjoys its freedom, is not of little importance! If you neglect your well-being, the safety of your body, and the soundness of your senses, you should be aware of that, then taste the abundant flavours of life presented to you, and praise Allah – You Benefactor – for all this ample good that He ﷻ has offered you.

Do you not know of people who are deprived of such blessings, and about whom Allah ﷻ alone knows the extent of their torment?

There are those who are imprisoned by illness and unable to move properly.

And those who are gripped in agony after having one bite of food, because their digestive system is functionless.

And those who seek to inhale fresh air to revive their ill chest, but the movement of breathing only brings them pain which causes them to cough up blood!

If you recover from these illnesses, do you think that Divine Decree will have equipped you with futile provision? Or offered you something that is not to be accounted for? Not at all.

Allah ﷻ commissions you according to what you are offered. It is wrong to assume that your capital is represented by all the gold and silver that you have gathered; your original wealth is the total potential empowered in you by Divine Decree, such as intelligence, ability, freedom, and at the top of all the Blessings, bestowed upon you by Allah ﷻ, is the good health you enjoy in your life and your well-being.

It is strange that many people belittle this wealth, which they only own for themselves, and do not share it with anyone else. This contempt is an ingratitude which should be denounced; Dale Carnegie said: "Would you sell both your eyes for a billion dollars? What would you take for your two legs? Your hands? Your hearing? Your children? Your family? Add your assets, and you will find that you won't sell what you have for all the gold ever amassed by the Rockefellers, the Fords and the Morgans combined. But do we appreciate all this? Ah, no, as Schopenhauer said: 'We seldom think of what we have but always think of what we lack'.

It is narrated that "Haroun Arrasheed" said to "Assamaak": 'Advise me of something (while he was

offered a glass of water)'. The man said: 'O Emir of the Believers, if you were deprived of this drink of water, would you have exchanged your rule for it? He said: 'Yes'. The man said: 'And if you were deprived from urinating it, would you exchange your rule for the ability to do that? He replied: 'Yes'. The man finally said: 'Many blessings are better than rule, which is not even equal to a drink or urine!'

If this man wanted to highlight the fact that the reign of the Caliphate is far less than a common everyday blessing, and show him that it is more valuable than his sovereignty; we, on the other hand, may look at this advice from its other side; we should reflect on the fact that these blessings – which the kings may exchange their rule for – we may obtain without any effort, being unaware of its real value.

Do we mention this grace? Do we acknowledge this blessing? Do we thank Allah for it?

Most of us get used to our healthy state, so only those unfortunate enough to be ill are even aware of its high value. This long familiarity might lead us to disesteem and neglect, yet Allah ﷻ does not cancel a particular blessing just because His servants have ignored it. He ﷻ makes us accounted for it, according to its size..

The Prophet ﷺ said:

"By the name of Him in Whose Hands my soul is, a man would come on the Day of Judgment with a good deed, which would be too heavy even for a mountain (if placed on it), but one of the blessings of Allah would rise and

would nearly abrogate all that; if not for the intervention of the Grace of Allah ..."¹.

It means that people who enjoy every blessing of Allah should make more effort to get closer, in equity, to the piety offered to them.

Islam sees life as a blessing, and commands us to thank Allah ﷻ for the spirit and the senses He has granted us. He ﷻ made both night and day subservient to us, and granted us life, between the earth and sky. This great life is a special tribute which should be honoured by us, as we see the Truth of Allah in it; He ﷻ said:

«How can you reject Allah, when you were dead and He gave you life, then He will make you die and then give you life again, then you will be returned to Him»².

Allah has granted us our given senses in order to live in harmony in this existence, and thus to discover its contents, enjoy its beauty and its power, with our physical and mental abilities, until our perception rises to the level duly thanking Him ﷻ for His having honoured us:

«Allah brought you out of your mother's womb, knowing nothing at all, and gave you hearing,

¹ Transmitted by Al-Mundiri.

² Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 28.

sight and hearts so that perhaps you would show thanks»¹.

An individual might be unaware of the extensive range, from which he receives his provisions; if he looks carefully at a table in front of him, which displays different types of food from around the world, he would probably discover that he is eating Russian wheat, African meat, European fruit, Asian tea, and probably other items from America.

If he reflects on the earth and sky, he would discover that they both operate to serve him in his life, and would understand Allah's verse:

«Mankind! Worship your Lord who created you and those before you, so that you may become righteous. It is He who made the earth a couch for you, and the sky a dome. He sends down water from the sky and by it brings forth fruits for your provision...»².

The truth is that most misfortunes and hardships come as a result of people's anarchy and corrupted instincts more than from nature itself!

Suppose that a man left a mansion behind for his three sons which was large enough for three hundred people, but then the sons had a dispute, in it, which resulted in expelling or imprisoning each other. Was the defect in

¹ Surat An-Nahl, verse 78.

² Surat Al-Baqarah, verses 21,22.

the house or its former owner? Or was it in the sons oppressing each other?

Likewise, this worldly life has been ruined and marred by people's frantic materialistic growth which was not subjected to the legislation of Allah ﷻ, and never adhere to His Divine Guidance.

If we had sought the advice and instruction from the Light of Allah, which He ﷻ sent down to us, and been aware of the many blessings available to us, then it would have been a different situation, for us and our life.

However, most of us despise this richness of life and health that we possess, and accordingly are unable to benefit from it. Dale Carnegie relates a story about a man who suffered the pressure of failure and worry following the crisis he had suffered; yet he learnt more about how to live than he had learnt in his previous years; he said: 'For two years, I had been running a grocery store in Webb City. I had not only lost all my savings, but I had incurred debts that took me seven years to pay back. My grocery store had been closed the previous Saturday; and now, I was going to the Merchants and Miners Bank to borrow money so I could go to Kansas City, to look for a job. I walked like a beaten man. I had lost all my strength and faith. Then, suddenly, I saw, coming down the street, a man who had no legs. He was sitting on a little wooden platform equipped with wheels from roller skates. He propelled himself along the streets with a block of wood in each hand. I met him just as he has crossed the street and was starting to lift himself up a few inches over the curb to the sidewalk. As he lifted his little wooden

platform to an angle, his eyes met mine. He greeted me with a grand smile: 'Good morning, sir. It is a fine morning. Isn't it?' he said with spirit. As I stood looking at him, I realized how rich I was. I had two legs. I could walk. I felt ashamed of my self-pity. I said to myself if he can be happy, cheerful, and confident without legs, I certainly can with legs. I could already feel my chest lifting. I had intended to ask the Merchants and Miners for only one hundred dollars. But now I had courage to ask for two hundred. I had intended to say that I wanted to go to Kansas City to try to get a job. But now I announced confidently that I wanted to go to Kansas City to get a job. I got the loan; and I got the job!

How precious is the health that runs through our veins, and how dear is the power given to us by Allah ﷻ.

Islam wants us to strongly pay attention to the value of the blessings surrounding us, and the necessity of benefiting from them. Here is a story through which the Prophet ﷺ wanted to inform us about the sublimity of the blessings: Jabir bin Abdullah ؓ narrated:

"The Prophet ﷺ came out to us and said: 'Gabriel ؑ had just left my place and he said to me: 'O Muhammad, by Him Who sent you with the truth, there is a servant of Allah who worshipped Him for five hundred years on top of a mountain, in the sea. The mountain was thirty yards in length and thirty yards in width. The sea was four thousand parasangs¹ on each side. Allah ﷻ had given a fresh spring, the width of a finger, which pours fresh tasty water that gathered at the bottom of the mount; and

¹ Old Persian measure of length (about 3 or 4 miles)

a pomegranate tree that produced each night a pomegranate for him. He would worship his Lord during the day, and in the evening, he would go down to the water, make ablution, and pick a fruit to eat. Then he would rise again to worship his Lord. When his time came close, he asked his Lord to allow him to die while prostrating to Him; and He ﷻ allowed it. On the Day of Resurrection, the Lord says: 'Take My servant to Paradise with My Mercy'. But the servant says: 'O my Lord, but rather with my deeds'. Then Allah ﷻ says: 'Compare My servant's deeds and My Blessings to him'. The blessing of sight has covered the worshipping of five hundred years; and the blessing of the whole body remains a surplus over him. So the Lord says: 'Take My servant to Hell'. As he is carried to Hell, he shouts: 'O my Lord, enter me to Paradise with Your Mercy'. The Lord says: 'Bring him back. As he stands before Him, the Lord says to him: 'O slave of mine, Who created you when you did not exist?' He says: 'You, my Lord'. The Lord says: 'And who gave you the strength to worship Me for five hundred years?' He says: 'You, my Lord'. The Lord says: 'Who settled you down on a mountain in the middle of the sea, and gave you fresh water and a pomegranate every night – a fruit which comes out once a year! – and who did you request to help you die in prostration, and he did?' He says: 'You, my Lord'. The Lord says: 'It is all with My Mercy, and with My Mercy, I enter you to Paradise. Take My servant to paradise. What an excellent servant you were!' So Allah ﷻ made him enter Paradise. Gabriel ﷺ said: 'Things are rather with the Mercy of Allah, O Muhammad'"¹.

¹ Transmitted by Al-Mundiri.

In this Hadith, there is praise for the value of the Blessings of Allah ﷻ which most people enjoy in their life. There is no impairment to the element of justice, or any violation to the rules of requital in the Hereafter.

Some foolish people use the expression: "Things are rather with the Mercy of Allah" to interpret the Reckoning to be the way they want, and presume that the deeds of the individual do not decide for entering Paradise or Hell. The claim that it is the Sublime Mercy that some people – even if they were sinful – that would benefit them and allow them to enter Paradise; yet would be forbidden for others – even if they were obedient to their Lord – who would enter Hell.

These absurd and silly ideas have spread among recent generations; they have corrupted their thinking, and weakened their efforts to worship their Lord. They have made them distant to Allah, and ignorant of His Religion.

How could anyone enter Paradise without an account for his efforts and deeds, while Allah ﷻ said:

«They will have the Abode of Peace with their Lord. He is their Protector because of what they have done»¹

and He ﷻ said:

«That is the Garden which We will bequeath to those of Our servants who were righteous»²

¹ Surat Al-An'am, verse 127

² Surat Mariem, verse 63.

and He said:

«That is the Garden you will inherit for what you did»¹.

Disobeying Allah ﷻ will not draw His Mercy closer nor His Pleasure. It is good deeds which brings a servant closer to the sympathy and forgiveness of Allah ﷻ. And the first good deed is to acknowledge the magnitude of the blessings bestowed upon you, without exaggerating the facts and reality; for Allah ﷻ makes you accountable for each one of them; you will certainly fail to repay it with you deeds!

¹ Surat Az-Zukhruf, verse 72.

There Is No One Else on Earth Like You

I had much admiration for my teacher; I was enlightened by his words and guidance. I would have hoped to have been as successful as he was, by being eloquent and impressive. However, I never tried to imitate him nor follow his method; and I suppose that if I had tried, I would have failed, being trapped in my own ways.

I am restricted by my own mental characteristics, just like a train on its rails; when I derail from them, I come to an inevitable halt.

Some of my friends imitated our teacher, in all his manners; and desired to get closer to him, by displaying a role identical to him and copying his activities. I was so pessimistic about this 'revolting dissolution', and expected the worse to come from it – to the man and all his imitators – because the principles of truthfulness, sincerity, counseling, and the truth itself get lost in an environment characterized by poor or excellent acting!

Why do people not develop according to their own nature – that Allah has created them with, the way the plants grow in the fields; date palms do not change into grapevines, and fruit does not compete with each other in matters of flavour or colour. The easiest thing for the imitator to do is to cancel his own personality, before those he identifies completely with; when they give an opinion, he agrees; and when they request consultation,

he intentionally gives them the nearest answer to their desires.

I once said to those imitators: It was not in this manner that the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ behaved with him ﷺ; and he was the highest example for the Caliphate!

When he ﷺ consulted his Companions about the captives of "the Battle of Badr", each one of them gave his opinion according to his own understanding:

Abu Bakr, being patient and gentle, preferred pardon, and 'Umar, being severe, thought of punishment. The Prophet ﷺ commented on the consultation of his two Companions, by likening the first to Abraham ؑ who said:

«If anyone follows me, he is with me; but if anyone disobeys me, You are Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful»¹

and likening the other to Noah ؑ who said:

«My Lord, do not leave a single one of the polytheists on earth! If You leave any they will misguide Your servants and spawn nothing but more dissolute polytheists»².

¹ Surat Ibrahim, verse 36

² Surat Noah, verse 26,27.

It is clear that each of the Companions had sought the truth, guided by his independent thinking and instinct, in solving the matter. This pure method, free from flattery and instability, is the way of Islam: It is Allah's natural pattern, by which He made mankind.

With all the variety of good attributes and lofty nature of the Companions, gathered around the Prophet ﷺ, no one saw any objection in asking him ﷺ to change their position in the battle field, and debate what was best. The Prophet ﷺ used to consider his Companion's consultation and implement it.

If only our leaders and presidents could acknowledge this truth!

They prefer people who lose their own nature and personality, for them – people with less or without any substance – and disregard people who keep their own free nature – even if their own work and productivity brought them to success.

This is the calamity in our nations! I heard a story about the late Russian leader, "Stalin"¹ who fired one of his prominent advisers, because whenever he consulted him about a matter, the man pointed to what he believed was closest to pleasing his leader. Such an employee is useless and cannot be faithful. So the Russian leader expelled him; but if he was in our eastern provinces, he would have been well treated, until his death...

Imitating the leaders, and the dissolution of one's personality are deficiencies which are rebuked in every

¹ We do not know whether this was a genuine story or not!!

field, but to a greater extent, in the field of religion; because no one reaches a level of Righteousness until his own nature and characteristics become righteous. Any pretension – while having lost this principle – brings only discredit to the individual.

A few years ago, I heard a young man in the Faculty of Law – he later worked in Journalism – giving a lecture to a large crowd; he was referring to a subject, the “Unity of Existence” and “identification with Allah”, among the subjects which were infinitely discussed by the Sufi scholars in their studies and efforts, without reaching a clear result confirmed by the True Islam. I heard the young lecturer quoting an invalid statement, which belonged to Sufi poet who was invoking Allah. We may hear this from their old teachers, who are involved in Da’wah (Call to Islam), and have been worshipping Allah ﷻ for a long time; we would not accept nor tolerate it from them, but would overlook it. But how could we accept this from a young man who is far from this foolishness, to a great extent?

When man leaves his personal traits, and breaks away from his sound mental characteristics, he destroys his life, and creates much disorder in his conduct.

I learnt a story of a crow who loved walking on the ground; so it never walked the proper way, and never learnt how to fly, as when newly born!

Dale Carnegie said: “I asked the employment director of a major oil company about the biggest mistake people make in applying for jobs. He replied: ‘The biggest

mistake people make in applying for jobs is in not being themselves. Instead of letting their hair down and being completely frank, they often try to give you the answers they think you want.’ But it doesn’t work because nobody wants a phony. Nobody ever wants a counterfeit coin.”

The psychiatrist, William James said: “Compared to what we ought to be, we are only half awake. We are making use of only a small part of our physical and mental resources. Stating the thing broadly, human individuals thus live far within their limits. They possess powers of various sorts which they habitually fail to use.”

Carnegie said: “You are something new in this world. Never before, since the beginning of time, has there ever been anybody exactly like you; and never again throughout all the ages to come will there be anybody like you again. The science of genetics informs us that you are largely the result of the twenty-four (single) chromosomes contributed by your father, and the twenty-four (single) chromosomes contributed by your mother. These forty-eight chromosomes (forming twenty-three pairs) comprise everything that determines what you inherit. In each chromosome there may be, says Amram Scheinfeld, ‘anywhere from scores to hundreds of genes – with a single gene, in some cases, able to change the whole life of an individual’. Truly, we are ‘fearfully and wonderfully’ made. Even after your mother and father met and mated, there was only one chance in 300,000 billion that the person, who is specifically you, would be born! In other words, if you had 300,000 billion brothers and sisters, they might have all been different from you”.

Then he added: "You are something new in this world. Be glad of it. Make the most of what nature gave you".

Emerson said: "There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried".

It is upon these scientific foundations, which we have quoted and explained, that the "Minbar Al-Islam" magazine had explained the Verse of Allah: **(Each person faces a particular direction, so race one another to do good. Wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together. Truly Allah has power over all things)**¹. It does not matter that I have quoted the (meaning of the) Verse here; for it is a summary of the words of Carnegie, confirming the statements he drew forward. Besides, there is no injustice or outrage in it.

The editor of the interpretation of the Verse said: This holy Verse was cited for a talk about the Qiblah and its change of direction from Bait Al-Maqdis (Al-Aqsaa Mosque in Al-Quds – Palestine) to Al-Kaabah Al-Mukaramah (Al-Masjid Al-Haram – Makkah)... therefore, it was necessary for interpreters of the Qur'an

¹ Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 148.

to consider its relation to the subject of Al-Qiblah, and explain its meaning in this matter; so they said:

1. "The direction means Al-Qiblah, and among the meanings of the Verse is that people of every religion have a Qiblah they direct themselves to; whether polytheists or people who have received Divine Revelation.
2. That it was especially for people who have received Divine Revelation; they are the Jews, Christians and Muslims. Each of them has a particular Qiblah.
3. That it was especially for the Muslims alone – i.e. that each community of Muslims has a Direction to the Kaabah for their Salat: southern, northern, eastern, or western.

The Diversity of People's Characteristics

This Verse may have another meaning; it states that every human being has a pattern in his life, or a particular direction according to the natural tendencies in his or her self, suitable to his or her own character.

People are not seen to be one repeated copy, identical in identical in their physical and mental characteristics. In their physical aspect, they are diverse in length and width, strength and weakness, health and illness. They are also different in their types of nose, eyes, mouth, forehead and facial features – i.e. their bodies and faces do not derive from the one same model, having the innate properties of one particular example. This miracle of wonderful diversity, which is a proof of the Ability of the Creator ﷻ, is enhanced by another diversity, in the aspect of the mind, the straightening of one's nature, the inherent

capacity of instinct, and the characteristics of thoughts and feelings. For people may differ as much in physical appearance and ability as in their mental attributes of personality, as well as intellectual and linguistic capacity.

The Diversity of Direction in People's Hearts

It is known that the physical aspect is but a body for the soul, and that multiple innate reasons control the guidance of the body to the direction it desires. Nature has its rules; instincts have their demands; affection has its desires and its inclinations...and all these only become manifest through the body – i.e. Man can not express himself, nor reveal his hidden facts, except with the diverse physiological system and network of nerves and neurons that constitute the body. So the outer movement of the body is simply an expression of internal factors; hormonal and psychological.

Therefore, the true nature of Man is not determined by the body, but is instead due to those mental factors that unite the tendencies of one's nature; instincts, affection, and thoughts; as one mental order, which characterizes the particular behaviour of its owner, and is seen, in the minds of people as an individual personality, distinguished from others.

This mental blend is the true nature of a human being, which gives him his independent existence, and honours him with personal characteristics, not shared by anyone else.

This interpretation is one of the meanings of the Verse:

«Each person faces a particular direction»

i.e. that every people have their Qiblah, or direction, according to the interpretation of Imam Al-Qurtubi in his Tafsir.

Respecting the Self-Existence of Man

Allah ﷻ does not intend, by this honoured expression, just to confirm of another piece of information; but rather, He ﷻ states a lasting principle, and an original law, from the laws that benefit of the individual and society.

1. He ﷻ wants to state that every human being has an independent personality; so if he preserves this independence, supports its sources, purifies its branches, and lives within the range of his personality, then he has set himself on the Pattern of Allah, Who ﷻ wants him to be like a nation of its own, relying on itself...but if he denies his self its right, and goes on to imitate people of fame, in their movements, voices, aspects, and their way of working; or if he goes beyond his character to show off before people, then he has ignored the Pattern of Allah ﷻ; he has ruined his personality and changed the creation of Allah, which He ﷻ has bestowed upon him. Satan has never ceased trying to change of the creation of Allah, since he swore:

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«I will command them to change the creation of Allah»¹.

2. Allah ﷻ wants to confirm that every human being has the right to choose the direction that he sees convenient for himself and his community – i.e. his right to live freely within the good society. This direction should originate from his heart and inner self; Allah ﷻ said:

«Each person faces ...»

i.e. each person has a direction that he takes himself, independently choosing it. So, if he is considered outside his true nature, then he would be living in confusion and disturbance, without his (familiar) mental factors... and it is also the change of the creation of Allah.

Allah ﷻ wants to confirm the right of freedom of opinion for every human being; everyone has a unique perspective through which he reflects, on life, as no one knows in which corner lies the truth. The study of life from different angles ensures a maximum understanding of rightness and welfare, as one can realize psychological and material benefits for the individual and society. It is for this reason that Allah ﷻ has created each of us with a different natural way of thinking, and allocated to each one of us his own perspective through which he could examine life and what it offers.

Freedom of thought does not mean that Man is free to think, yet ignore everything around him. For, every

¹ Surat An-Nisa', verse 119.

faculty we are given from Allah ﷻ, we are under an obligation to use it for the purpose it was created, and it is one of the main ways of thanking Allah ﷻ; its misuse and suppression is a type of ingratitude for all His Blessings ﷻ.

Furthermore, it is a state of depravation, distress and misery. What is the value of the individual if he or she has to live with a stagnant or dull mind?

What is the value of a nation if the millions of its population avoid examining all its social affairs, or blindly follow them as truth?

One could imagine the amount of benefit it would miss, if it were to remain paralyzed and backward; if its research bodies and general welfare system were suspended or made void, in such destructive way.

The final thing to say about freedom of opinion is that it is the natural right of an individual, yet it is governed by the binding commandment, and the message which is an obligatory to convey.

Also, freedom of opinion prevents injustice among the population, and is like shield that prevents a ruler from ruling despotically. Indeed, the rise of tyrannical rule is established only by spoiled or corrupted minds, by suppressing knowledgeable people and forcing them to examine things from the oppressor's point of view.

The "Pharaoh of Egypt", in the time of Moses ﷺ, attained this realization, so he declared the suspension of the freedom of opinion by saying:

«I only show you what I see myself and I only guide you to the path of rectitude»¹

i.e. he had decided to suspend the use of their faculty of reasoning; so they were not allowed to hold their own opinions in any matter, except that of Pharaoh.

That is a distortion of people's talents, a change in Allah's Creation and the real work of Satan.

The Potentiality of Social Disunion and Imperfection

However, what are the consequences when every one of us becomes free in personality, thinking, and tendencies of life?

It is quite possible that it would lead us to a life of chaos, separation and disparity; and that we would be affected by greed, personal desires, and self-opinionating?

But this would not happen if man preserved his pure natural goodness, being unwilling to accept any evil. But if he develops the characteristics of corruption, then the forces of evil would cause great damage on earth. There would be an increase of vicious and corrupted people, spreading vice and depravity; there would be less cooperation between us, and it would be difficult to gather the whole nation upon any general opinion, or plan, to ensure its unity and benefit.

¹ Surat Ghafir, verse 29.

The Guaranty of Goodness and Unity

It is for this reason, we see that the Verse determines the conditions, and places the bonds which protect us from any evil that might come from those principles, and safeguards the goodness within them; Allah ﷻ has said:

«so race each other to do good. Wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together. Truly Allah has power over all things»¹.

If every person has a personal direction, then he should have a particular objective to organize and control its course. For, no one can argue that an aim which puts the direction of each individual in order is a way of establishing goodness; it is confirmed in nature, and every sound philosophy and religion. Therefore, Allah ﷻ ordered us to

«race each other to do good»

i.e. make goodness your main objective in every direction one takes; so when an aim is established, the unity of the nation is established; and if this is a good aim, then goodness will prevail.

¹ Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 148.

Make Lemonade Out of Lemon

(When the wise man is handed a 'lemon', he says: "What lesson can I learn from this misfortune? How can I improve my situation? How can I turn this 'lemon' into lemonade?" Chancellor R. Hutchins, University of Chicago)

Steadfastness – as defined by our scholars – is allowing the self to endure anything it dislikes. And this is a sound interpretation, if we mean facing hardships firmly, and a well balanced insight. However, if we mean that "allowing the self to endure adversities" is the endurance of the bitterness of reality, and the constant feeling of harm and grievance, then it would lead Man to dwell on life with misery and apathy. Sometimes patience may fail, when the self is confronted with its desires and the adversities it suffers. For this is the outcome of a pure feeling of agony, and struggling in misery, without expecting any guiding light to save him!

However, Islam changes this patience into pleasure, where this change has been approved. Yet, the self would taste the coolness of this pleasure when a harsh order is received; because the matter requires that some gentleness should accompany hardship, winning over any feelings of aversion; otherwise, there would be no point in saying, 'I am pleased' whenever the self is in a complete state of abhorrence and disgust!

The first thing Islam requires from you is to blame your feelings for all that is happening to you. Who knows? Maybe the hardships you are enduring are a way to an

unknown source of goodness; so, if we soundly conduct ourselves with them, we would easily be led to a better future. Allah ﷻ has said:

«It may be that you hate something when it is good for you, and it may be that you love something when it is bad for you. Allah knows and you do not know»¹

Many of us become annoyed and displeased about the circumstances surrounding us; and this feeling of wearisome discontent may increase because of any shortage, deprivation and misfortune, yet such hardships and pains represent a fertile ground for cultivating ourselves; indeed, the capabilities of the great people only became apparent in the midst of misfortunes and calamities!

On this subject, Dale Carnegie said: "The more I have studied the careers of men of achievement, the more deeply I was convinced that a surprisingly large number of them succeeded because they started out with handicaps, and that spurred them on to great endeavour and great rewards. Yes, it is highly probable that Milton wrote better poetry when he became blind and that Beethoven composed better music when he became deaf."

Those inflicted people never mentioned their misfortunes, nor tried to seek people's sympathy and help; they never

¹ Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 216

let their facial expressions describe their bitter reality; not at all!

They accepted their pre-ordained condition, and relied on their own capabilities to change their misfortunes into blessings. These are the pillars of greatness, and this is how to change a 'lemon' into lemonade, as stated by Carnegie, quoting "Harry Emerson Fosdick" from his book "The Power To See It Through", in which he asks: "Wherever did we get the idea that secure and pleasant living, the absence of difficulty, and the comfort of ease, ever, of themselves, made people either good or happy? On the contrary, people who pity themselves, go on pitying themselves even when they are laid softly on a cushion, but as always in history, character and happiness come to people in all sorts of circumstances, good, bad, and indifferent, when they shouldered their personal responsibilities". Not every person with the ability to change his misfortune into a benefit is successful; for there are many of them who fail to bring happiness into their lives, if it does not come according to their own desires. As for people of certainty and determination, they meet life with a willing heart, even before they are subjected to any misfortune! Sheikh Al-Islam, Ibn Taymiyah, despising the maltreatment of his opponents, said: "My imprisonment (detention) is my retirement, my exile is travel, and my killing is martyrdom". Are these afflictions not the extent to which the oppressors might go? But to the great men, they have turned into blessings which they welcome with a smile, not with grief.

Dale Carnegie reported about a woman who moved, with her husband, to a desert where he was stationed, at an

army training camp; but she loathed the place, and was so miserable that she wrote to her parents, saying that she even thought of leaving her husband alone, and returning to them; She said: "I said, I couldn't stand it one minute longer. I would rather be in jail! My father answered my letter with just two lines – two lines that will forever ring in my memory – two lines that completely altered my life:

'Two men looked out from prison bars,
One saw the mud, the other saw the stars.'

"I read those two lines over and over. I was ashamed of myself; I made up my mind I would find out what was good for me, in my present situation; I would look for the stars".

During the olden times, the distinction between one's ambition and determination to succeed was known to have been equivalent to the difference of one's ability to benefit from misfortunes, and one's ability to earn in difficult circumstances; William Bolitho said: "The most important thing in life is not to capitalize on your gains. Any fool can do that. The really important thing is to profit from your losses. That requires intelligence; and it makes the difference between a man of sense and a fool". This is true; just look at some examples of changing losses into profits: When Abdullah bin Abbass ؓ lost his eye, and learnt that he was going to live the rest of his life blind, imprisoned in darkness, deprived from sight (of life and the living); he never became introverted nor felt any regret about his fate. Instead, he accepted his condition

imposed on him, and expressed his pleasure in what Allah ﷻ had decided for him.

The Difference between Egoism and Altruism

The instinctive nature of loving oneself (egoism, selfishness) is natural to mankind; and there is no harm in admitting it; yet one should watch one's conduct in life, so as not to stray from the right course. This nature is not as evil, as it may sound; for the bustling life and the civilization on earth are due to its effect more than anything else.

An old rule, which was based upon loving the tasteful and hating the painful, and upon seeking personal benefit and rejecting harm or failure, is actually the reason for people's materialistic or scientific progress (and discoveries) that has taken the world from one era to another.

If this love for oneself is natural in people, it can also be used in order to gain the Hereafter, avoid Hell and enter Paradise. It is not a sign of lowness, as some people claim, that the individual should worship Allah ﷻ in the hope of attaining His Pleasure or out of fear from His Anger; it is perfection of worship through a dignified path. Do not be deceived by the 'ritual escapades' of the Sufis and confusing imaginations.

Allah ﷻ said:

﴿Say: 'I fear, were I to disobey my Lord, the punishment of a Terrible Day'﴾¹

However, this natural instinct should be supervised to avoid any serious consequences, in case it should become corrupted by only following its own desires; bringing hardship to the person, and injustice to other people.

When the feeling of selfishness exceeds its boundaries, the individual may become distant from people, and confined to his own, special world, where he would constantly praise his own status, and despise that of the others. His self-admiration generates, within his own world, feelings of self-deception and greediness. His 'ego' grows until it may even say: "I am your highest lord"!

The love of oneself, and one's living in secrecy, is bound to bring a person to his own destruction, even if he should manage to reach the highest status, in terms of dignity and authority. Concentrating in one's 'ego' remains a sign of ethical shortcoming, or even animal behaviour.

In every society, selfish people form a destructive element, where all virtues and benefits are lost, and both individuals and groups become dissolute in their pursuit of pleasure.

The expression 'I' may sometimes be used as an exemplar for enduring hardships, but it could also be used to state a fact that should be stored in one's mind. So it

¹ surat Az-Zumur, verse 14.

is, in these cases, nearer to altruism than to egoism; or rather it has no relation to the narrow meaning, for which it is widely known, as in the following Verse:

﴿Say: 'This is my way. I call to Allah with inner sight, I and all who follow me'﴾¹

and as in the Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ:

"I am the Prophet, in truth. I am the son of Abdul Muttalib"².

The 'I', in this case emphasises one's stand, in support of the truth; it opens a way for increasing Iman (faith) and committing oneself to fulfilling one's obligations, despite their load. In another Hadith, the Prophet ﷺ said: "I am the most fearful and the most acquainted with Allah"

The 'I' here does not reflect deception nor superiority; far that, as here it defines the source where the truth is derived, and from where a good example may be adopted.

The 'I' uttered by the person in a matter of greed, is not the 'I' uttered by the person in a matter of submission and humility.

In reality, egoism in a person should be treated from the early age, to allow him or her to grow with a sound outlook towards himself and others.

¹ Surat Yusuf, verse 107.

² Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Al-Baraa ؓ.

I (the author) have mentioned, in my previous books, that Islam made 'general brotherhood' a just system whereby one's rights and obligations are protected, and the exchange of affection takes place in a manner that elevates a human being to a level where he starts aspiring for others what he does for himself.

Dale Carnegie related many stories by which he intended to remove egoism from people's minds, and drive a human being into a circle of complete affection and general brotherhood; to train an individual to become a benevolent person, ready to show mercy and contribute towards other people. Then, he added: "Some people who read this chapter are going to say: 'All this talk about getting interested in others is a lot of damned nonsense! Sheer religious pap! None of that stuff is for me! I am going to put money in my purse. I am going to grab all that I can – and grab it now – and to hell with the other dumb ducks!'

Well, if that is your opinion, you are entitled to it; but if you are right, then all the great philosophers and teachers, since the beginning of recorded history, were wrong. But since you may sneer at the teachings of religious teachers, let's turn, for advice, to a couple of atheists. First, let's take the late A.E. Housman, a former professor at Cambridge University, and one of the most distinguished scholars of his generation. In 1936, he gave an address at Cambridge University, on "The Name and Nature of Poetry". In that address, he declared that 'the greatest truth ever uttered and the most profound moral discovery, of all time were these words of Jesus (according to the Bible): 'He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that

loseth his life, for my sake, shall find it'". We have heard preachers say that, all our lives. But Housman was an atheist; a pessimist; a man who contemplated suicide; and yet he felt that a man who thought only of himself wouldn't get much out of life; he would be miserable. But, the man who forgot himself, in service to others, would find the joy of living.

If you are not impressed by what A.E. Housman said, let's turn, for advice, to the most distinguished American atheist of the twentieth century: Theodore Dreiser. Dreiser ridiculed all religions as fairy tales, and regarded life as "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Yet Dreiser advocated the one great principle that Jesus taught – service to others. 'If he (man) is to extract any joy out of his span', Dreiser said, 'he must think and plan to make things better, not only for himself, and this depends upon his joy in (caring for) others and theirs in him'.

It is sad that the reputation of religious advice has reached this lowly state, that teachers are forced – in order to convince others of their advice – to support it with statements from prominent atheists. So that people know that it is not a way to gain forgiveness in the Hereafter; and not a way of obeying the Commands of Allah ﷻ.

This matter is, certainly, based upon a fact that both believers and disbelievers should respect.

Therefore, we should love other people, and help them to find happiness; for it is the best way for us to find our

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own comfort and happiness, and also there is no compliance with advice or instruction.

We acknowledge the fact that egoism is a misfortune, for its people and others, and that Allah ﷻ had legislated, for us, teachings that would prevent us from succumbing to its shortcomings; He ﷻ offered mankind whatever should keep them in groups, mutually based upon piety, and entrusted with mercy.

Let us hear some sublime Guidance from Allah ﷻ, with regards to this matter, which would allow us to dispense with the statements of all atheists. A Muslim should be a useful member in his nation; he only brings good, and nothing but righteousness is expected from him. He reflects the light of truth in his activity, a reinforcement of blessing and good fortune, and a support to overcome all hardships.

He proceeds, in this life, with a heart full of affection, and expressions of amity and peace; his generous hand is extended to offer blessings to whoever reaches it.

This is the nature of Islam, and the message of a Muslim in this life; the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Upon every Muslim there is enjoined (compulsory) Sadaqah (alms)." They (the people) said: "If one has nothing?" He said: "He should work with his hands, so that he may benefit himself and give in charity." They said: "If he cannot work or does not work?" He said: "Then he should help the oppressed unhappy person (by word, action or both)." They said: "If he does not do it?" He said: "Then he should enjoin what is good (or said

*what is reasonable)." They said: "If he does not do that?" He said: "Then he should refrain from doing evil, for that will be considered, by Him, as a Sadaqah (charity)."*¹

This Hadith divides people into types, according to their talents and different status. Charity made by a man, to whom Allah ﷻ has granted a healthy body, is necessary to increase the production of his nation, contributing to its general revival, and cooperating with others upon piety and righteousness, not upon sin and hostility. By this activity, he benefits himself, and pays his duty towards the society in which he lives; this is the duty which was expressed in the Hadith: "Upon every Muslim there is enjoined (a compulsory) Sadaqah (alms)". So, whoever was unable to fulfil this great, positive activity, would not be able to come to the support of others. If he could not have mercy upon himself, nor would he help the merciful; and if he was not useful with his strength, he would encourage beggars; and this is what the Prophet ﷺ expressed as: "Then he should help the oppressed unhappy person (by word, action or both)".

A Muslim may also be in a position, other than the two mentioned above, where he possesses no means for his perfection or advancement which would make him strong, useful, and supportive. Therefore, he should conduct himself to do good deeds and abstain from evil, and cling to his remaining attributes of faith, in the hope that he might save himself with it, as stated at the end of

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari.

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These are the characteristics of good behaviour and conduct, as explained by the Prophet ﷺ, which can only be good for the faithful; he attracts both those people who know him and those who do not; they are quite sure of his noble-mindedness.

The most evil people in the Sight of Allah are the ones who are not expected to give any good, and they are to be avoided. But a believer is never in that category, because his relation with Allah ﷻ makes him trustful and beneficent. Allah ﷻ has compared the benefit of the faithful to that of the palm tree, in the sense that he or she is in all conditions beneficent and useful to others, even if the aspects of his benefit differ from one to another. This is perhaps the meaning of the Verse:

*«Do you not see how Allah sets forth a parable?
A goodly word as a goodly tree, whose root is
firmly fixed, and its branches reach to the sky.
Giving its fruit at all times, by the Leave of its
Lord»¹*

This Verse explains the nature of the faithful, and the outcome of the truthfulness in his or her conduct. A faithful group should try to display an image according to the teachings of Islam, by praising righteous people and denouncing those who spread corruption; an image which would make everyone look upon our 'nation' (Ummah)

¹ Surat Ibraheem, verse 24,25

with admiration. People, in general, are not attracted by sweet expressions as much as they are by great deeds, and high morals.

Abu Hurairah narrated that Khubaib ؓ was detained as a captive by the infidels in Makkah till they decided unanimously to kill him. (At that time) Khubaib borrowed a razor, from one of the daughters of Al-Harith, to shave his pubic hair. She gave it to him, yet remarked later on: 'I was heedless of a little baby of mine, who moved towards Khubaib, and when it reached him, he put it on his thigh. When I saw it, I got scared so much that Khubaib noticed my distress while he was carrying the razor in his hand. He said:

'Are you afraid that I could kill it? Allah willing, I would never do that'»¹.

It was narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"It is an obligation upon everyone to give Sadaqah (charity), everyday" Abu Dharr said: "O Messenger of Allah, how can I give Sadaqah, while I do not have any money?" the Prophet ﷺ replied: "Among the categories of Sadaqah are: to say Allahu Akbar, to say Subhana Allah, to praise Allah, to testify that there is no god but Allah, to seek forgiveness from Allah; to enjoin good and forbid evil; to remove thorns, bones or stones from people's path, to give guidance to the blind; to teach the deaf and the dumb; all these categories of Sadaqah are from you (back) to yourself"²

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari.

² Transmitted by Imam Ahmed.

Therefore, you can clearly see the cycle of good deeds, where a Muslim may benefit by helping others and comforting them.

If this could be the duty of a single Muslim, in his limited environment, then how about the duty of the Muslim Ummah among all the nations of the world? The fulfilment of Allah's Rights, in this beneficial context, is the basis of success in this world and the Hereafter. The Prophet ﷺ has said: "Good deeds prevent calamities of evil, and Sadaqah stops the Anger of the Lord; the beneficent people in this world will become the beneficent ones in the Hereafter; and the vicious people in the world will become the vicious ones in the Hereafter; and the first to enter Paradise are the beneficent people."

The Prophet ﷺ pointed to one of the characteristics of Iman (Faith) when he said: "If your good deed delights you, and your sin saddens you, then you are a believer".

Certainly, when one feels cheerful about a good deed that one has fulfilled, and sad for a sin one has committed, then that is a sign that one has an active conscience which controls one, and this is a special reference by which one defines what one loves and what one dislikes concerning values and conduct.

Allah ﷻ has given us some examples of both these types of people involved in good deeds:

«O you believers, do not nullify your Sadaqah by demands for gratitude or insulting words, like he

who spends his wealth, showing off to people, not having faith in Allah nor the Last Day. His likeness is that of a smooth rock coated with soil, which, when heavy rain falls on it, is left (stripped) bare. They have no power over anything they have earned. Allah does not guide infidel people. The metaphor of those who spend their wealth, desiring the Pleasure of Allah and firmness in themselves, is that of a garden on a hillside. When heavy rain falls on it, it doubles its produce; and if heavy rain does not fall on it, there is dew. Allah sees what you do»¹

When rain falls on marble, it washes its surface clean, disclosing its true nature; Divine punishment removes any dust from petrified hearts and keeps them dry and void from any beneficence! But the other hearts, instead, receive an abundance of rain to embellish them, because of all the blessings and piety within them.

Therefore, we should perform good deeds, as a firm, well-established duty, free from all aspects of boastfulness, and we should free ourselves from the pitiful intentions by which a person may offer to help someone only to receive something in return or to get someone on his side.

It is a long process (to take) before one's deeds are free from all these suspicious intentions; for selfishness is firmly established in one's mind, and people often expect

¹ Surat Al-Baqarah, verses 264, 65.

immediate compensation for a good deed, whatever the difference in its type and size.

As one casts a casual glance at people's lives, it is no surprise to witness the tyranny (of the self) behind many activities and conditions, even if those people should try hard to present a more acceptable image of themselves. The social disturbance that we suffer is derived from this source (tyranny); for the lack of cooperation and interest in the affairs of the community, and the lack of interest in the country we live in, the people we are related to, and the message we adhere to; all these are signs of a low degree of certainty and emergence of hypocrisy.

Allah ﷻ has described those who retreated from the Battle of Uhud in a manner to depict the selfishness within their minds; He ﷻ said:

«Whereas another group became prey of anxious thoughts, thinking other than the truth about Allah – thought belonging to the pre-Islamic times – saying: 'Do we have any say in the affair at all?' Say: 'The affair belongs entirely to Allah'»¹

Those people admired only themselves and their own ideas; therefore, if other people do not come to their terms, they became so displeased and critical. There are among them those whose opinions are linked to what they could gain for their own benefit; if he gains something, he is overjoyed; and there is no share for him,

¹ Surat Al-'Imran, verse 154.

he becomes very irritated and clamorous; Allah ﷻ has described them:

«Among them there are some who find fault with you concerning the Zakat. If they are given some of it, they are pleased, but if they are not given any, they are angry»¹.

The majority of people live within the limits of their own demands; if they are in need of something, their feeling towards it would increase and they would insist on acquiring it, or even take more than is necessary. However, if they should possess something, they would neglect it and would mention it only once it is sought after by others. Yet, if they ever offer it, it would be in a less generous manner! This is the greediest type of egoism; Allah ﷻ has mentioned some of its aspects:

«Woe to the stinters! Those who, when they take a measure from people, exact full measure, but when they give them a measure or weight, hand over less than is due. Do such people not realize that they will be raised up on a Terrible Day, the Day mankind will stand before the Lord of all the worlds?»²

This egoism which appears with weak belief in the truth (and compensation in the Hereafter), can also be experienced in the way in which some people act dishonestly, and give false measures.

¹ Surat At-Tawba, verse 58.

² Surat Al-Mutafifin, verses 1-6.

Allah ﷻ also gave an example of a person who accepts a judgment in his favour because he has a benefit, and refuses a judgment against him because he suffers a penalty, without considering justice or general interest:

«When they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger, so that he can judge between them, a group of them immediately turn away. But if right is on their side, they come to him submissively! Is there a sickness in their hearts or do they have misgivings or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger will be unjust to them? No, it is simply that they are wrongdoers»¹.

These types of mean people bring great harm to the Islamic society; an individual who runs only after his personal interests, disregarding public welfare, is indeed a person who causes distress to his people and his community.

A pure society may be established with those people who acknowledge the Right of Allah ﷻ, and the right of their community upon them. When everyone fulfils their duties, then the nearest benefit for such society is that everyone should enjoy his natural (basic) rights, without any worry or controversy.

When selfish people attack religion, with their narrow-mindedness, they falsify a text, and distort its meaning. They interpret it in order to get rewards, without doing

¹ Surat An-Nur, verses 48-50.

any deeds – a fruit without any plant – or it could be a punishment that is to be afflicted only on others, but not on them!

It is true that people who live within the boundaries of their own personal and selfish interests give a false reflection of the Islamic texts, in their way of thinking; they understand them only according to their own desires. One of them asked me: “Are we not – we Muslims – destined to Paradise, following the saying of the Prophet ﷺ (He who testifies that there is no god but Allah will enter Paradise)?”

I looked at him and examined the distance between his deeds and his hope, and I discovered it to be very far. I also understood that he did not know about Islam, but only what he believed would help his laziness; like the beggar who when he forgets all the verses in the Qur'an, yet remembers only one of them:

«Those who produce a good action will receive ten like it»¹

but he reads this Verse only to get the attention of people and collect money.

I said: “Don't you know, from the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, anything except this one Hadith? Along with this Hadith, he ﷺ said:

‘A Qattat (slanderer) will not enter Paradise’² and he said:

¹ Surat Al-An'am, verse 160.

² Transmitted by Al-Bukhari.

*"One does not enter Paradise if he cut off his relations with relatives"*¹

and he said:

*"Anyone who has haughtiness, the weight of a seed, in his heart will not enter Paradise"*²

and he said:

*"He who deceives is not of us"*³

and he said:

*"He who does not respect our elderly, is not merciful to our youths, and does not give our people of knowledge their due rights is not of us"*⁴

Have you forgotten all the teachings of the Sunnah, which remind you of your obligations, but thought only of what you assumed were your rights?"

These type of people refuse to acknowledge their shortcomings, however if they are forced into seeing them, they think that they are able to wash all their sins away with one simple excuse, or a simple (good) action.

When some people with Islamic knowledge were asked to seek forgiveness from Allah ﷻ, their answer was:

«Those who made Hijra (migrated for the sake of Allah) and were driven from their homes, suffered harm in My Way, and fought, and were killed; I will erase their bad actions from them and admit

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari

² Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

³ Transmitted by Muslim.

⁴ Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

them into Gardens with rivers flowing under them, as a reward from Allah ﷻ¹.

As for foolish people, they imagine that their major sins would be cleared without having to undergo any treatment to purify themselves. I have learnt from my reading that there are people who link the forgiveness of all their misdeeds with a simple, easy action; such as the 'removal of sins' like the 'falling of drops' of the water with their ablution.

One has to understand that Allah ﷻ does not convey His Ample Reward in an action like wudu', unless its owner possesses deep Iman (faith) and true sincerity, which qualify him for sacrificing his life and property for the sake of Allah ﷻ.

Religion is a set of rights and obligations; as with the Duniya (this worldly life) which is a link between these two approaches to life. Therefore, one should fulfil one's duty, feel its burden, without avoiding one's obligations. If one fulfils one's duty, then one should expect one's reward; then one could ask for one's due, entirely, without blame.

As for an individual who lives life under the banner of "is there any more," without being self-content; such an attitude will not be of benefit in this world, nor in the Hereafter.

¹ Surat Al-'Imran 195.

Purity of Secrecy and Publicity

To treat things by covering over their deficiencies and decorating their outer appearance has no significance or benefit; whatever this deceitful treatment has achieved among people, it will not change reality.

Islam does not celebrate anything that has a hidden defect or shortcoming; what is the value of something that has an embellished outer appearance but a rotten inner core?

Islam does consider the perfection of human beings and their good appearance, but only if this exaltation is based on having a pure heart and clear conscience, with the intention of seeking the truth.

Beauty is a state of mind, refined in nature, and devoid of grief. Its great characteristics are protected from the perils of misfortune, saved from any thoughts of evil, within the realm of life. At this level, any devilish temptations cease, because they can not find a dwelling place, nor entrance into it.

Human beings respond to the good and evil around them in the way that a radio receiver reacts to the long and short waves around it. The nature of the channel received depends upon the receiver's tuning and its direction. Likewise, the human being's reaction is based on his or her state of mind.

In the first state, he lives in an atmosphere of goodness, free of all sorts of sins and disobedience, and this is what Allah ﷻ points out in His reference to Satan:

«He has no authority over those who have Iman and put their trust in their Lord. He only has authority over those who take him as a friend and associate others with Allah»¹

As for the second state, the individual reacts to the incentives of crimes which harass him, and leads him to a distressful condition; Allah ﷻ has said:

«Do you not see that we send demons against those who are infidels to goad them on? So do not try to hasten their punishment. We are simply counting the number of their days»².

Allah has told His servants to purify their hearts and minds from all types of disloyalty and deceit, and to protect themselves from the evil intentions of Satan, by being more vigilant and faithful to their duties, and truthful in their guidance towards Him ﷻ. He ﷻ sent down a whole Surah to help His servants to protect themselves from being victims to any devilish insinuations, and to keep themselves pure in heart; as in Surat An-Nas:

«Say: 'I seek refuge with the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind, from the evil of the insidious whisperer, who whispers

¹ Surat An-Nahl, verse 99, 100.

² Surat Maryam, verse 83, 84.

in people's breasts and comes from among the Jinn and mankind)

It describes how the faithful set themselves under the protection of the Power of Allah, in order to safeguard their pure minds away from the evil intentions of Satan. But seeking refuge in Allah has to be coupled with good deeds. When the peasant says: 'I seek refuge with Allah from drought'; it will only be accepted of him if he says it while he is cultivating his land and putting all his efforts in achieving his goal. When the student says: 'I seek refuge with Allah from failure'; it would be effective for him once he has shown some determination to revise all his lessons properly, and acquire the necessary knowledge for his examinations.

When the Muslim says: 'I seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the damned' then he should be resistant to the attractions of evil, rejecting all the temptations that come his way; in harmony with all the types of worship which are obligatory upon him. But if he says: 'I seek refuge in Allah' while he remains inactive or follows his own desires; then this is a type of contradiction, which is rejected by Allah ﷻ, the All Knower of the Unseen and the Visible.

Islam refutes all that is bad and chaotic, because true greatness is when an individual can enjoy inner serenity, because of his sincerity, which is too powerful for Satan to shake off.

The reformation of the self does not occur by ignoring its defects, or placing a cover over them! Nor is its

purification achieved by displaying a wonderful personality to hide its real desires. Desirable beauty is found when both the inner and the parts of the self are balanced, purifying one's appearance and straightening one's conduct; Allah ﷻ said:

«Abandon wrong actions, outward and inward. Those who commit wrong actions will be punished for what they have perpetrated»¹

We should know that the perfection of excellent human characteristics can not be achieved by one successful step, alone. But rather it is the outcome of successive effort, careful and excellent organization. Allah ﷻ only gives knowledge and wisdom to a person whose entire life is based upon beneficence; someone who manages to control himself and his steps on the Right Path, unshaken by the devilish insinuations. Allah ﷻ said with regards to his righteous Messenger, Yusuf (Joseph) ﷺ:

«And then when he became a full-grown man, We gave him knowledge and right judgment too. That is how We reward all doers of good.»²

The early Muslim scholars made an outstanding effort guiding people to the truth, and rescuing them from base instincts, which could have driven them to a state of decay. They sincerely encourage Man to elevate himself and resist all decadent ways; they remind him that he possesses all the faculties, in his pure nature, to enable him to ascend.

¹ Surat Al-An'am, verse 120.

² Surat Yusuf, verse 22.

Among the morals which they have mentioned, we notice that their aspect of religiousness is based upon a wakening of their intellect, and the nobility of affection. They have issued mental exercises, which can be regarded as amazing regulations, in the world of virtue; advising those people who indulge in their own desires to observe the following advice (which ensures one's freedom from the claws of Satan, when he allures him to the world of sin)

1. To have free-will, but when feeling zealous, to protect himself from harm.
2. To have Patience, which he enforces upon himself, to endure a moment of temptation.
3. To develop a powerful mind, which encourages him to endure those long, tiresome moments; all courage is but patience for an 'hour'; and a better life is attained with patience.
4. The perception of good fortune, and remedy through patience.
5. The perception that the pain that may result from following one's desires is more important than one's feeling of pleasure, at the time.
6. That to remain in harmony with Allah ﷻ and people is more beneficial than the pleasure of following one's own desires.
7. To prefer the pleasure of virtue, and its dignity, to that of sin.
8. The feeling of delight when overcoming the enemy, and driving it away defeated; for it did not fulfil its aim (of harming you).

9. The conviction that one is not born for one's desires, but for a great purpose, which one only attain by disobeying futile, worldly desires.
10. One should dislike seeing an animal in a better condition than oneself; an animal can distinguish, by using its instinct, between what is beneficial for it and what is harmful; but human beings are given intelligence for the same reason.
11. One should contemplate the consequences of following one's desires; realising that one's sinfulness has made one miss the chance of cultivating many virtues, implicated one in vice, and brought distress to one's life.
12. To acknowledge the fact that the pleasure from his desires is temporary, and that one should consider one's weak situation afterwards – the things one has missed, and what has really happened to one.
13. He should try to have empathy for the conditions of other people, and to perceive the effects it has on one's life.
14. To look into the demands of the self – with regards to one's desires – and to consult one's religion and mind, realising that those demands are actually harmful, not beneficial in any way.
15. To strongly reject the disgrace afflicted upon one through obeying one's desires. One should not be impressed with the tyranny and pride of those people who indulge in their own desires; they are the most disgraced people, deep within themselves, as they have combined pride and shame.
16. One has to compare between the soundness of one's faith, dignity, property and status, and between obtaining a desired pleasure; so one could see that one

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16. One has to compare between the soundness of one's faith, dignity, property and status, and between obtaining a desired pleasure; so one could see that one

would be foolish to adopt the latter at the expense of the former.

17. One should not feel subjugated by having to live under the authority of one's enemy; for whenever Satan senses a sign of weakness in a human being – i.e. lack of determination and inclination to one's desires – he could easily overpower one and deceive one, using devilish insinuations.
18. One should know that whenever self-desire mingles with anything, it corrupts it; if it infiltrates knowledge, it misleads it towards innovation and turns its owner into a heretic; if it falls upon Zuhd (Asceticism) it leads the person to hypocrisy and compromise the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ; if it is used in judgment, it leads the person to commit injustice and stray away from the truth; if it is associated with rule and power, it leads the person to become disloyal to Allah ﷻ and the Muslims, by ruling with his own desires.
19. One should know that Satan has no way inside the human being, except through the person's self-desires; he may wait around one until he finds a way to corrupt one's heart and deeds.
20. One should remember that opposing one's self-desires grants one control over one's body and speech. Both self-desire and the intellect are in a constant state of conflict, whichever is strongest, at the time, will dominate the person.
21. One should know that self-desire enslaves one's heart and turns a person into its captive; so whoever opposes, has freed oneself to follow the path of righteous people.

Between Faith and Atheism

I met a group of young atheists – who are unfortunately widespread like the weeds in no man's land – and I interviewed one of them to discover the insight of his mind! I found their idea about Allah ﷻ similar to the idea of a foundling about his father; he does not know Him, nor is he just to Him!

I found that the majority of them have a conception of God based on blind imitation and illusion! They regard knowledge and faith as contradictory to one another; and their intellectual approach usually eliminates religion from their thoughts!

Then they found themselves – even if they have never studied a great deal about the physical sciences – assuming the position of nuclear scientists; they invent their own perception of life and its Creator, as it is related to them, not as real fact.

I know one of them who has never had a telescope, nor even entered a chemical laboratory, nor involved himself in any serious practical experiment, yet still he chooses to be an atheist, because he is one of the 'scholars'; and 'scholars' have faith only in the material world!

You may add to these people those groups who learn some of the truth and ignore another part of it, yet rush to issue their conclusive judgments, with only their limited knowledge. Imagine the chaos in tribunals if the judges

released their judgments, after listening to only half the testimonies from the prosecutors and half from the defence!

Those atheists have acted similarly! They have declared their disbelief, after acquiring a very limited degree of knowledge, which has given them some understanding of the nature of things, disclosing some of the limitations of physical existence. This type of disbelief (polytheism) is more complex than the first type (the one which associates partners with Allah, for example), because atheism takes a person deep into the world of deception, illusion and poor imitation.

Francis Bacon said: "A little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion".

Dale Carnegie said: "I can remember the days when people talked about the conflict between science and religion. But no more."

I find myself compelled to confirm a fact which might escape the minds of many people, that there is a difference between the faith in Allah – as it is established in the minds of many thinkers and great scholars – and between the affiliation to a particular known religion, especially in the West. Pure knowledge has guided thousands of scholars to Allah ﷻ, and made them stand breathless before His outstanding ability. Likewise, sound thinking has had similar effect on many leaders and rulers. Whereas, those, whose minds were filled with a strong feeling that this world must have a powerful

God, have contented themselves with this phase of Iman (Faith), at least, yet may refuse to increase their spiritual knowledge. They could be forgiven, to a certain extent, about their wavering; the question is: which path they should take to acquire knowledge about Allah?

As for Jews or Christians, they would not find much in their churches or books that will attract them to theology. Some parts of their minds have considered one aspect of the great divine creation of this universe and our consciousness within it; so why would they get involved in any problematic issues which their mind would refuse to easily accept – i.e. that Divine Power consists, for example, of three aspects (divine persons of the Trinity: father, son and holy spirit) Therefore, they prefer to stop within their own (limited) knowledge; and create their own way of life, based upon ideas of which they have approved according to their experiences, away from the doctrines of priests and fortune-tellers.

I remember the priest who was in charge of visiting for Marshal Georneg, who had been detained by the allies, before his execution – yet what he said about in the crucifixion of Isa (Jesus) ﷺ, as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Anyway, he continued to speak to the detainee, when the latter interrupted him saying: 'O father, I am a believer in God, and consider Jesus to have been a noble man!'

That was the faith of that man. He as with thousands of leaders, scholars and great personalities correctly believe in the existence of God; they also correctly believe that Jesus ﷺ was a noble man, not a deity.

Therefore, these people should distance themselves from religious knowledge, calmly; for it is not necessary to reproach it, as long as they are not forced to acquire it! The majority of scholars in the Christian world form this category. As for Jewish scholars, their knowledge of God is accompanied by an overwhelming feeling of being a prosecuted race; they still have the remnants of monotheism, unaffected by the trinity adopted by the Christians. These Jewish scholars believe, deep within themselves, that the Christian churches are based upon the worship of a man of illegitimate birth! Few of them are refined by knowledge, which would reduce the degree of hatred within their nature.

The importance of this is that Faith in Allah, the Creator of the heavens and earth, is still being established in people's minds, and that their inner conscience is still being heard, even though it is sometimes disguised by misguidance around it. This belief is part of the truth, which has reached its completion through Islam. People whose feelings are sometimes agitated with that belief are, at those moments, nearer to Islam than to any other religion. Allah ﷻ has accepted that those people know Him better in hard and distressful times, but then they forget Him when they are safe:

«It is He who conveys you on both land and sea so that when some of you are on a boat, running before a fair wind, rejoicing at it, and then a violent squall comes upon them and the waves come at them from every side and they realise there is no way of escape they call on Allah, making

their Deen sincerely His: If you rescue us from this, we will truly be among the thankful. But then, when He does rescue them, they become rebellious upon the earth, without any right to do so»¹.

The reality is that I have come across many Western scholars and thinkers in various situations, and became convinced of the (near) soundness of their faith; indeed, their knowledge of God is far from the narrowness of Judaism and the mystical complexity of Christianity, but closer to the tolerance of Islam and its simplicity. However, these people dislike Islam and the Muslims, despite their beliefs! But they may be forgiven, to a certain extent, for their hatred, because Muslim people have distanced themselves from the teachings of Islam; their serious deterioration, in every field has prevented masses of people from formulating a good opinion of it.

The message of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ itself, from a purely scientific approach, has never been displayed in a manner that shows people its essence, as it was revealed by Allah ﷻ. If it had been portrayed this way, it would have influenced many of those (special) people who base their faith upon logic, free of fictitious traditions; and there would also have been a response from the masses, who are in need of a rich source of guidance and advice; for all this knowledge is to be found in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ.

People with great minds do not stand motionless before the crisis of trying to find "the truth", which has

¹ Surat Yunus, verses 22, 23.

dominated their world; so they searched for God, and sought His Help alone, looking upon others as humans, like themselves, even Jesus himself ﷺ! Therefore, they managed to establish sound faith – even though it may be very limited – away from idolatry, with all its rituals and statues.

Their faith is not atheism, even if it does not accept the Torah, the Bible or the Qur'an. This is because they largely ignore the latter, or know little of it; and as for the former two, they are incompatible with their great intellectual ability.

This view is in agreement with Dale Carnegie, when he said: "I interviewed Henry Ford a few years prior to his death. Before I met him, I had expected him to show the strains of the long years he had spent in building up and managing one of the world's greatest businesses. So I was surprised to see how calm, well, and peaceful he looked at seventy-eight. When I asked him if he was worried, he replied: 'No. I believe God is managing affairs and that He does not need any advice from me. With God in charge, I believe that everything will work out for the best in the end. So what is there to worry about?'"

Ford was in agreement with Ibn 'Ataa' Allah, the Alexandrian, with this logical submission, acceptance and trust that whatever happens to us is destined by God.

If Mr. Ford never knew about Ibn Ataa' or learnt from him, then we should take a look a summary of the words

of this great Muslim scholar to see the similarity in their logic, despite their distance, both in time and space!

Ibn 'Ataa said, regarding submission to Allah ﷻ:

1. To know that Allah ﷻ had prior planning of you; that He was concerned about you, even before you were for yourself! He ﷻ was managing you before you existed, likewise He ﷻ will be managing you after your existence!
2. To know that your management of yourself is in ignorance, because you only see well towards yourself.
3. To know that fate does not follow your own planning.
4. To know that Allah ﷻ is the only One in charge of planning His Kingdom, high and low, visible and invisible; therefore, you should surrender, to Him, the management of your existence in this world!

After listening to this advice, some people may think that to have complete Certainty, one has to disregard one's potential to act, and wait instead for Allah to manage his life and fulfil his desires for him! This is pure fallacy; it was never meant by Ibn 'Ataa' nor adopted by "Mr Ford". Man has to be aware of his environment, and is duly right to act under his given circumstances; Ibn 'Ataa' added to his last words, as an explanation: "To take into consideration the cause and effect is not opposed to having trust in God".

The Prophet ﷺ said: "If you truly have trust in Allah, he would provide for you the way He ﷻ provides for birds; they set out empty but return full"¹. He ﷺ emphasises the

¹ From "Tayseer Al-Wusul".

reliance on Allah ﷻ, not by ignoring the effective reasons, but by relying on Allah and acting at the same time. It is their actions which are the cause of their state living, but Allah ﷻ is their Provider.

And I say: "Islam refuses to accept any doubts, in the freedom of the will, and rejects, strongly, any abasement of the great potentials that Allah has granted Man, in this life. However, when we look at our affairs, in reality, we are likely to see the narrowness of the circle in which we exercise our potential and will, compared to the vast scope of the Omnipotence and Will of Allah ﷻ.

The causes, that we attach ourselves to, are, sometimes, beyond our ability; therefore, we should not be deceived by the potential that we possess.

Those Americans, who are madly rushing after the vanities of this world, despair from their failures, and are in need of the advice of "Ibn 'Ataa'", "Ford" and others. As for people of the (eastern) Islamic countries, a different system of causes and effects are accepted by them; there are two opposing categories: one group says: "Work in order to live", and another says: "Stay calm to live"!

For those who regret what has already passed them by, and live in hope of achieving miracles, I forward the following quote, by William James: "There is between us and God an unshakable relationship; so if we submit ourselves to His Supervision, then all our wishes and hopes would come true".

As for those idle people, who live by relying on destiny, they should be reminded that Allah ﷻ wants them to arise and work.

There are some people who respect faith, and try to spread it among social gatherings, not because it is the Truth, but because of the pleasing effects it has upon people and groups, yet they say: 'If there were no god, it would still be necessary to assign a group of people so they can seek His Pleasure and fear His Punishment!' Therefore, Iman, according to them, is a social necessity, to ensure safety and educate the masses!

This is an absurd way of thinking, disregarding the reality of religion and its value; it is rather a disregard and contempt of Truth itself. The recognition of the existence of God should take place by subjecting the mind and heart to the clear indisputable evidence.

I call on people to watch against being deceived by any false evidence – that denotes the non-existence of God – and see that truth lies with Allah, alone. Having Faith in Allah ﷻ, alone, is not a political game, nor exceptional legislation.

Nay, it is the Truth (and light), from which the ignorant have been misled; but those who are blessed with a sound Fitrah (nature) and pure thinking; they will never go astray from it. This type of Iman (faith) is a treasure which is rarely absent from great minds. With all its diverse types and levels, it represents spiritual support, in times of hardships.

Dale Carnegie said: "Jack Dempsey told me that he never went to bed without saying his prayers. He told me that he never ate a meal without first thanking God for it. He told me that he prayed every day when he was training for a bout, and that when he was fighting, he always prayed just before the bell sounded for each round".

It is natural that people turn to Allah whenever they are afflicted with a calamity, or any crisis; they know that He, alone, can rescue them and bring peace to their lives. So it is obligatory to acquire the correct knowledge about God – from whom we plea in times of crisis – we should not act in any manner that displeases Him, and we should not assign to Him – whether intended or not – anything that is not true to Him ﷻ!

The polytheists, in olden times, expressed their love for God with the following words: Labaika-llahumma labaika, labaika la shareeka laka labaika, illa shareekan huwa laka, tamlikuhu wa ma malak (Here I am –at your service – here I am and you have no associate; there is only one associate with you; you own him while he does not own!) When Islam became established, it corrected this expression, changing the words through Revelation, yet keeping the original form to link people, affectionately, with their Creator, so the words became: Labaika-llahumma labaika, labaika la shareeka laka labaika. Inna lhamda wa-nni'mata laka wal mulk, la shareeka lak (Here I am –at your service – here I am and you have no associate. Verily, Praise and Blessing and Sovereignty are for You, there is no associate with You).

The amendment of people's belief and worship is the major objective of Islam; the first nations knew about Allah ﷻ but their knowledge was defective and limited; He ﷻ has said:

«Most of them do not have Iman in Allah without associating others with Him»¹

so it was very necessary to expose this ignorance and remove those fallacies.

It is very regrettable that even though Christians turn to Allah, they associate other partners with Him ﷻ; therefore, their direction to Allah is distorted and their supplication deviates from the Right Path. They supplicate to Allah, meaning Jesus, or to Jesus, meaning Allah ﷻ. But Jesus ﷺ, Muhammad ﷺ and all the other Messengers were only human beings, who were dependant upon Allah ﷻ; they sought His Forgiveness and Reward, and feared His Punishments.

Atheism has turned many generations into purely materialistic creatures, in this world, yet ignoring the Lord of the universe. Yet, instead of this atheism is a faith based upon the whole truth, guided with the Light of the Truth. For monotheism is the central focus of Islam. It was brought by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ; as a confirmation of the previous calls made by all the Prophets, for the establishment of the truth.

Books and articles are available these days, pointing clearly to this Truth, as does the Qur'an;

¹ Surat Yusuf, verse 106.

1. Deuteronomy: Chapter 4, verse 35:

"You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides Him there is no other."

Compare: the Qur'an (Muhammad: 19):

«Know then that there is no god except Allah».

2. Deuteronomy: Chapter 4, verse 39:

"Acknowledge and take to heart, this day, that the Lord is God, in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other."

In the Qur'an (Az-Zukhruf: 84-85):

«It is He who is God in heaven and God on earth. He is the All-Wise, the All-Knower. Blessed be Him to whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and everything in between them».

3. Isaiah: Chapter 43, verses 10-11:

"You are My Witnesses, declares the Lord, and My Servant, whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me, no god was formed, nor will there be one after Me. I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from Me there is no Saviour."

In the Qur'an (Al-Baqarah: 133):

«Or were you present when death came to Ya'qub (Jacob) and he said to his sons, 'What will you worship when I have gone?' They said, 'We will

worship your God, the God of your forefathers, Ibrahim, Isma'il and Ishaq – one God».

4. Isaiah: Chapter 44, verse 6:

"This is what the Lord says – Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the First, and I am the Last; apart from Me, there is no God."

In the Qur'an (Al-Hadid: 1-3):

«Everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies Allah. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. He gives life and causes death. He has power over all things. He is the first and the Last, the Outward and the Inward».

5. Isaiah: Chapter 46, verse 9:

"Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me."

In the Qur'an (Ashuraa: 11):

«Nothing is like unto Him».

As in all times, there are always people, with different languages and colours, who are attached to their Lord, and faithful in their worship of Him ﷻ. The difference between them is judged by the extent of their faithfulness and their closeness to Allah, the One, and the Almighty.

In times when there is widespread ignorance of Allah ﷻ, the feelings which fully embody pure monotheism are the most loved by Him ﷻ; and whenever, the signs of the Sublimity of Allah, acknowledgment of His Oneness and absolute Perfection, in a supplication, then it is nearer to receive the response from Allah ﷻ. It was narrated that the Prophet ﷺ heard one of his Companion saying: 'O Allah, I ask You, by virtue of the fact that praise is due to You, there is no deity but You, Who showed favour and beneficence, the Originator of the Heavens and the earth, O Lord of Majesty and Splendour, O Living One, O Eternal One'. The Prophet ﷺ then said: 'He has supplicated Allah using His Greatest Name; when He is supplicated by this name, He answers, and when asked by this name He gives'¹.

Indeed, can you not see that this companion's ﷻ heart was ablaze with a faith that millions of people have strayed away from? His heart is declaring the Oneness to Allah ﷻ, while masses of people dwell in polytheism, by assigning a son or a partner to Allah! (We seek refuge with Allah from polytheism).

The Prophet ﷺ also encouraged any supplication in which there is praise and eulogy to Allah ﷻ, and any expression that denotes how this world is dependant on Allah and His Mercy; such as: "O Creator of the heavens and earth; there is no god but You, to whom be Glory; I was indeed a wrongdoer, O Allah, the Living and Self-Sustaining One".

¹ Transmitted by Abu Dawud, on the authority of Ana bin Malik ﷺ.

There are many supplications which express the meaning of faithfulness and exaltation, addressing Allah ﷻ with His Names and Attributes, seeking His Mercy and His Support.

We, as human beings, are in so much need of Divine Guidance, to lead us to the truth, especially when we are living in a state of confusion. We are also exposed to tribulations from every direction, like an open, unprotected city which is liable to be destroyed at any time, from any side. When an individual looks at his or her body or life, one discovers that one is always exposed to dangers that might turn one's life upside down in turmoil and hardship; therefore, we are in need of the blessings of Allah, which would ensure peace and ease in our lives. This is all guaranteed by performing Salat for the Mu'min (faithful believer).

Islam has referred to many honoured, daily occasions, when a man may praise his Lord, asking for His Protection and His Guidance. The Prophet ﷺ said (in a Hadith Qudsi):

"Allah ﷻ said: 'I have divided prayer, between Myself and My Servant into two halves, and My Servant shall have what he has asked for'. When the Servant says: 'Al-hamdu lillahi rabbi l-amin', Allah (Mighty and Sublime be He) says: 'My Servant has praised Me'. And when he says: 'Ar-rahmani r-rahim', Allah (Mighty and Sublime be He) says: 'My Servant has extolled Me', and when he says: 'Maliki yawmi-d-din', Allah says: 'My Servant has glorified Me' - and on one occasion He said: 'My Servant has submitted to My Power'. And when he says: 'Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in', He says: 'This is between Me and My Servant, and My servant shall have

what he has asked for'. And when he says: 'Ihdina s-sirata l- mustaqim, siratal ladhina an'amta 'alayhim ghayril-maghdubi 'alayhim wa la-d-dallin', He says: 'This is for My Servant, and My Servant shall have what he has asked for'"¹.

As people rush about in their various fields of life, their bodies become covered with sweat and dust, and their souls are disturbed by different aspects of worry and anxiety. So an individual is in need – after every period of activity – to a time of recovery, to regain his or her purity; it is Salat that provides such a time to regain this lost, yet long desired state of perfection.

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: *"The five daily (Salat) prayers are an atonement for sins committed in between them..."*².

It is this voracity for the material concerns of this world which burn people's souls, as they try to make their living! People become obsessed, in their race to provide for their families; therefore, they show few signs of mercy and compassion, which leads to complacency in virtue and all aspects of ethics. So it is no surprise that Allah ﷻ commanded the performance of Salat, which has among its objectives to save people from that frantic lifestyle, from time to time during the day. Anas bin Malik ؓ has said: "The Prophet ﷺ said: 'At the time of every Salat, Allah ﷻ sends an Angel who shouts: 'O children of Adam, Rise and extinguish the fires which

¹ Hadith Qudsi, transmitted by Ahmad.

² Transmitted by Al-Bazzar.

you have set'"¹. This Hadith refers to the infringements and sins committed by people in their disturbed lives daily, and how Salat lessens those problems when they are confronted!

Salat raises the soul of an individual to the heavens, whenever one should become too gravitated towards the earth (pursuing one's whims and desires); thus returning one back to Allah ﷻ, whenever one is in careless or negligent state of mind.

Dale Carnegie has related a quote from Dr. Alexis Carrel: "Prayer is the most powerful form of energy one can generate. It is a force as real as terrestrial gravity. As a physician, I have seen men, after all other therapy had failed, lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene effort of prayer... Prayer like radium is a source of luminous, self-generating energy... In prayer, human beings seek to augment their finite energy by addressing themselves to the Infinite Source of all energy. When we pray, we link ourselves with the inexhaustible, motivating power that spins the universe. We pray that a part of this power be apportioned to our needs. Even in asking, our human deficiencies are filled and we arise strengthened and repaired... whenever we address God in fervent prayer, we change both soul and body for the better. It should not happen that any man or woman could pray for a single moment without some good result".

These words appear to be a good explanation of Allah's words, for the following Verse:

¹ Transmitted by Attabarani.

«If my slaves ask you about Me, I am near. I answer the call of the caller when he calls Me. They should therefore respond to Me and believe in Me, so that hopefully they will be rightly guided»¹.

The best of goodness, a person can earn, is achieved by one who wakes up in the morning, thinking of his Lord, seeking His Help and Support. He receives the Divine guarantee of having a happy day being well protected! This is because he wakes up, pleasing his Lord and seeking His Protection; and Allah ﷻ grants safety to whoever seeks this from Him. It is narrated in the Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ:

“He who has prayed the dawn prayers (in congregation) is, in fact, under the protection of Allah. And it could never happen that Allah would demand anything from you in connection with the protection (that He guarantees), that one should not receive it. Anyone who tries to harm you would then be thrown in the Fire of Hell”²

This is a declaration from Allah ﷻ to mankind that they should honour a man who starts his day with Salat, then goes to his work, under the Protection and Care of Allah.

It was narrated that Al-Hajjaj ordered Salim bin Abdullah to execute a man. Salim said to the man: ‘Have you done the Dawn Salat?’ The man replied: ‘Yes’. So Salim said to him: ‘You may go, free’. But Hajjaj said to Salim: ‘What has prevented you from executing him?’

¹ Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 186.

² Transmitted by Muslim, on the authority of Jundub bin Abdullah ﷺ.

Salim replied: ‘My father narrated to me that he heard the Prophet ﷺ say: ‘He who has prayed the Dawn prayer, is, in fact, under the protection of Allah’! So I dreaded to kill someone who is under the protection of Allah.’¹

These expressions picture the relationship of Allah ﷻ with His Faithful servants, and the fact that He ﷻ does not just place them under His Protection, but He also reminds mankind that any enmity against His Faithful servants will be taken as a war against Him ﷻ; He ﷻ said in a Hadith Qudsi:

“Whoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him”

To gain the Support of Allah ﷻ requires us to strengthen our relationship with Him, by seeking His Help with Salat, together with other obligatory and optional deeds!

The Divine honouring of those who link themselves with Allah ﷻ can reach the stage when He ﷻ makes their treatment equal to His; The Prophet ﷺ said:

“Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, will say on the Day of Resurrection: ‘O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me’. He will say: ‘O my Lord, how could I visit You when You are the Lord of the Worlds?’ Thereupon He will say: ‘Didn’t you know that a certain servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him, and were you not aware that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him?’ Thereupon He will say: ‘O son of Adam, I asked you for food but you did not feed Me’. He will say: ‘My Lord, how could I feed You when You are the Lord of the Worlds?’ He will say: ‘Didn’t

¹ Transmitted by Imam Ahmad.

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¹ Transmitted by Imam Ahmad.

you know that a certain servant of Mine asked you for food but you did not feed him, and were you not aware that if you had fed him you would have found him by My side?' The Lord will again say: 'O son of Adam, I asked you for something to drink but you did not provide Me with any'. He will say: 'My Lord, how could I provide You with something to drink when You are the Lord of the Worlds?' Thereupon He will say: 'A certain servant of Mine asked you for a drink but you did not provide him with one, and had you provided him with a drink you would have found him near Me'”¹.

This great dialogue indicates the extent of Allah's honouring of people whose relationship with Allah becomes so strong that He ﷻ associates their honour with His. Nevertheless, how high the status of a man may be to Allah, he is always liable to face hardships and strife in his life.

One should know how 'Umar bin Al-Khattab, one of the most just rulers that the world has ever known, was killed having been accused of injustice. Also, the first Muslims, who were subjected to critical sanctions by the polytheists, were forced to eat leaves of trees, until they became seriously ill. This was not hunger, due to their poverty, as the foolish may think, but through their strife and sacrifice.

One might ask: "What is the benefit of having such good connections with Allah ﷻ, with all the great care He ﷻ provides for His Close Faithful servants, if no one can avoid people's injustice or treachery? Where was the

¹ Transmitted by Muslim, on the authority of Abu Hurairah ؓ.

Divine Protection for 'Umar , 'Uthman, and 'Ali who were savagely killed? This questioning does not reprove what I confirmed earlier; but it is necessary that we should correct people's ideas about life, so they should not be misled by their superficial explanation of events!

Those people who ask such questioning should know that, before his death, 'Umar ؓ had asked Allah ﷻ to grant him Shahadah (martyrdom), and that his martyrdom should not take place on the Eastern front, where war was waged against Persia, nor on any other battle front against the Romans, but in the land of migration, Al-Madinah itself!

'Umar ؓ and other great personalities, know the nature of this worldly life, and comprehend their role in promoting Iman, ethics and justice, and also how to remove the "poisonous plants" which spread on earth, filling it with all aspects of injustice.

These great men know their role in society, and move with serenity and cheerfulness, despite the burden of their tasks. They are neither affected by any losses, nor are they afraid of any terrible end to their lives. Rather, it might be their wish, as in the case of 'Umar bin Al-Khattab ؓ.

I should clarify parts of this destiny, which may appear to be such a grievous tragedy. I confirm that it does not involve any cursing or mercilessness, and if Allah ﷻ authorises – pursuing the patterns of the universe upon which He ﷻ has created life – I shall do it while He ﷻ is

pleased with His Servant. Let us reflect on the saying of Allah ﷻ, in this Hadith Qudsi:

"Whosoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him. My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it. I do not hesitate about anything as much as I hesitate about [seizing] the soul of My Faithful Servant: he hates death and I hate hurting him".

What a great example of considerable compassion and sympathy! Death is inevitable, and Allah ﷻ wants to execute His fixed Decree, but His Servant dislikes death; so Allah does not want His Servant to feel pain coming from His Lord.

So, let us examine how the Divine Decree, in this example takes place, and the context of the expression: "I do not hesitate about anything as much as I hesitate about ...".

Therefore, there will be no aspect of curse or pain from Allah, felt during any of the tribulations of the great and dignified, faithful people, who, in their turn, accept all the decrees of Allah with submission and cheerfulness. No matter how hard and bitter an affliction may be, it will be easily accepted, as soon as it is known that it comes from

Allah ﷻ; but for other people who do not believe so, it would be most unbearable and destructive!

If the great fighters had treated death the way cowardly people do, none of them would have stood firm in battle. But they despised what others glorified; they moved forward (in the battlefield) while others ran away!

Likewise, faithful people relate great events to Allah ﷻ; so they are never overcome by fear, nor is their thinking ever disturbed! Likewise if they sense any danger, above their capability, they take refuge with Allah ﷻ, like a child who flees to the arms of his mother or father, to shelter from any discomfort, and seek his protection. It was narrated that whenever a matter became too serious for the Prophet ﷺ, he sought refuge with Allah ﷻ, in Salat¹.

Dale Carnegie said: "Why does religious faith bring us such peace, calm and fortitude? I will let William James answer that. He says: 'The turbulent billows of the fretful surface leave the deep parts of the ocean undisturbed; and to him who has a hold on vaster and more permanent realities, the hourly vicissitudes of his personal destiny seem relatively insignificant things. A really religious person is accordingly unshakeable and full of equanimity, and calmly ready for any duty that the day may bring forth'. So if we are worried and anxious – why not try God?... and why not link ourselves with the Inexhaustible Motive Power that spins the universe?"

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari.

Prayer (Salat) in Islam means two things: It may be (1) specific and (2) general:

One of them is these spiritual obligations to be practised during some periods of the night and day, which include many actions, such as: recitation of verses from the Qur'an, Tasbeeh (the saying of Subhanallah – Glorifying Allah), submission, bowing, prostration, standing, and sitting – all according to the manner of performing Salat, as decreed by Allah ﷻ and performed by His Messenger ﷺ.

Salat is the second pillar of Islam; no faithful person is exempt from performing it; it is a form of spiritual renewal for his heart. Whoever maintains it correctly, has proper faith, and may qualify for the Forgiveness of Allah and His Pleasure; but whoever neglects it – knowing about its obligatory status and its reward, exposes oneself to dreadful loss and destruction. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah, the Exalted, has made five obligatory prayers. If anyone performs proper ablution for them, offering them at the (right) time, and perfectly bowing and being submissive in them, it is a Guarantee of Allah that He will pardon him; if anyone does not do so, there is no guarantee for him on the part of Allah; He may pardon him if He wills, or punish him if He wills"¹. As for the one who neglects it, through denial and disbelief, he or she is weak in faith, and has little respect for the Deen (religion).

¹ Transmitted by Abu Dawud.

Prayer also means general supplication; whenever a man is overcome by worry, threatened by an illness, or troubled by a crisis, he calls out to Allah ﷻ, seeking His Protection, or asking for mercy and good health.

Islam has hundreds of different prayers, which cover any situation, whether someone is hoping to be rescued from a crisis, or asking for more blessings in life.

These prayers were given for the service of people to use whenever they should feel in need of Divine Intervention; for Allah likes His Servants to ask for His Blessings; He ﷻ even warns them not to rely solely on their limited abilities. He ﷻ said in a Hadith Qudsi:

"O My servants, all of you are astray except for those I have guided, so seek guidance of Me and I shall guide you, O My servants, all of you are hungry except for those I have fed, so seek food of Me and I shall feed you. O My servants, all of you are naked except for those I have clothed, so seek clothing of Me and I shall clothe you. O My servants, you sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness of Me and I shall forgive you".

Have you noticed this insistence in bringing a misled person back to the Lord, to receive provision and strength from Him, and to fully rely on Him? None is denied this abundant goodness but a wretched and miserable person! The Prophet ﷺ said:

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"Supplication is beneficial, regarding (both) things which have happened and things which have not

happened, so devote yourselves to supplication, O servants of Allah”¹

he ﷺ also said:

“Prostration is the weapon for a believer; the pillar of religion, and the light of the heavens and earth”²

and he ﷺ also said:

“Ask Allah for some of His Bounty, for Allah likes to be asked, and the most excellent worship is the expectation of relief”³.

¹ Transmitted by Abu Dawud.

² Transmitted by Al-Hakim.

³ Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

The Spirituality of the Messenger of Allah

Normally people go through periods when their minds are free from worries or distress, elevating to a level that makes their thinking and feelings clean and pure. Yet, it is only a matter of time before they go down to the lowest level again, and remain there for longer.

As for the great personalities, they are very tolerant and can adapt to most conditions, approaching life with greater consciousness and with stronger feelings. They establish themselves with sublime conduct from which they do not deviate.

Allah ﷻ has created mankind in this manner, and they have behaved like this ever since the beginning of their history. They either consist of the masses, who are tied to their own restricted demands, or special people, who managed to free themselves from those chains and allow their minds to be open to wider horizons.

Even among distinguished people, there are some dissimilarities in goodness and merit; for the wisdom of Allah ﷻ has decreed that He should chose Messengers, to convey for His Revelation, as the highest ranked among those special people; indeed, they are the elite, being distinguished in all qualities.

The Prophets are men who are not to be compared in their cleverness, willpower, high mindedness, and also

their complete understanding of human ability and group mentality.

It is quite wrong to assume that those Messengers only had natural goodness, qualifying them to lead their people, in times backwardness and simplicity. Nay! The leadership of nations, in both ancient and modern times, is given only to men who have enough mental ability to influence thousands of people to obey their commands. This fact has been mentioned by Allah ﷻ:

«And remember Our Servants Ibrahim, Ishaq and Ya'qub, men of true strength and inner sight. We purified their sincerity through sincere remembrance of the Abode. In Our Eyes, they are among the best of Chosen Men»¹.

One should perceive the secrets of greatness, as mentioned in this short description of Men of true strength and inner sight! People of courage have power and insight, devoid of any aspect of ignorance.

This is the meaning of "selection" – choosing the great people who would carry the Blessed Divine Revelation. Those Prophets were assigned to guide their people only, and for their particular era, at first. But the last Prophet (Muhammad ﷺ) was singled out, because his Mission was to guide the whole of mankind, until the Last Day, as he was sent with a Book (the Qur'an) which is to remain among people, always!

¹ Surat Saad, verses 45-47.

So, among those righteous people, the Prophet ﷺ was distinguished as the Messenger with the Last Message, the intersection of faith and virtues which were decreed to benefit both the first and the last generations.

He ﷺ represents the highest of all honoured examples; you may easily know him through the Book (the Qur'an), revealed to him by Allah ﷻ, and the wisdom of his speech (Ahadith). However, one may not be able to relate to this, except if one aspires to follow the sublime examples one discovers in his biography. Sinners who seek repentance, ignorant ones who seek knowledge, confused people who look for a decision, impotent ones who seek perfection; all such people, in their struggle to reach their objectives, will learn a lot about Muhammad ﷺ, because they will be guided by verses of the Qur'an, and benefit from his advice, in the Sunnah.

One of the characteristics of great spiritual leadership is that it carefully examines anything approaching it, for the sake of (the absolute) truth.

If nationalist leaders should wait for good opportunities, in the service of their home country, then spiritual leaders should prepare their followers for even bigger opportunities, to achieve perfection and peace, making this a better world to live in. Therefore, I say: One who imprisons oneself in one's own desires, and avoids promoting the truth, does not know about the Message of Muhammad ﷺ.

The high moral standards, as expressed in the words and behaviour of the Prophet ﷺ, came from his good

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knowledge of Allah ﷻ, and his constant remembrance of Him. He ﷺ indeed displayed some of the qualities of perfection which are only to be found in the attributes of Allah ﷻ. The whole world – from its very beginning – has never witnessed such a person to walk on the earth, while his heart was firmly linked to the heavens, as it is known from the life of the Prophet ﷺ. He reached a state of self-realization and self-perfection; being divinely devoted to his Lord, as a successor to His Kingdom on earth.

In the spiritual and intellectual heritage left by the Prophet ﷺ, one may see all the elements with which one can perform one's proper duty in life! Let us examine the power of emotion in the following strong supplication:

Zaid bin Arqam reported that after every Salat, the Prophet ﷺ would recite:

"O Allah, our Lord and Lord of everything, I bear witness that You are the Lord, alone, Who has no partner; O Allah, Our Lord and Lord of everything, I bear witness that Muhammad is Your Servant and Your Apostle ; O Allah, our Lord and Lord of everything, I bear witness that all Servants are brethren; O Allah, our Lord and Lord of everything, make me sincere to You, and my family too, at every moment, in this world and in the world hereafter; O Possessor of Glory and Honour, listen to me and respond (to my call); Allah is Incomparably Great; O Allah, Light of the heavens and earth"¹.

¹ Transmitted by Abu Dawud, Imam Ahmad and Annassa'i.

When there were no more words to express his emotional state as with this supplication, the Prophet ﷺ resorted to repeating the same phrases to express all his feelings of fear, love and reverence. On the surface, it looks like repetition of the same terms, but within it, there is expression of renewed levels of devotion.

In this supplication, we notice that the statement of the Prophet ﷺ, testifying that he is the Messenger, comes in the middle, between his declaration of Monotheism to Allah ﷻ, and his confirmation that all Faithful Servants are brethren. So, when he ﷺ said to his Lord that he was His Servant and Messenger, he had indeed shown his determination in fulfilling the trust and conveying the Message to all mankind, even if they should try to deny this fact and reject the one who delivered it.

This was a man who felt that the whole world had gathered to deny his Mission, and that all the powers of evil tried to shake him – and sometimes they managed to even make him feel isolated and weak; such a man would naturally wish to testify that he was conveying the truth, in order that his repeated testimony became a profound reply to those deniers. This came after Angel Gabriel ﷺ had revealed another testimony from Allah, and from the other Angels, which confirmed this truth:

«But Allah bears witness to what He has sent down to you. He has sent it down with His Knowledge. The angels bear witness as well. And Allah suffices as a Witness»¹.

¹ Surat An-Nisa', verse 166.

When one hears the Owner of the Revelation, as He ﷻ reveals this Testimony again, one can feel the power of the Holder of this truth, as he defies those liars:

﴿Say: 'What thing is greatest as a witness?' Say: 'Allah. He is Witness between me and you. This Qur'an has been revealed to me so that I may warn you by it, and anyone else it reaches. Do you then bear witness that there are other gods together with Allah?' Say: 'I do not bear witness'. Say: 'He is only One God, and I am free of all you associate with Him﴾¹

We may read of the Prophet's ﷺ sharp mental awareness. During the day, he concentrated well on his thoughts and nothing escaped his attention, and when he slept at night, his strong sensitiveness intensified upon his mental condition; so he was asleep while his heart was always wide awake. This was all due to his firm devotion to Allah ﷻ.

When he ﷺ went to sleep, he used to say:

"O Allah! I have surrendered myself to you and have turned my face towards You, and leave all my affairs to You and depend on You and put my trust in You, expecting Your reward and fearing Your punishment. There is neither fleeing from You nor refuge, but with You. I believe in the Book (Qur'an) which You have

¹ Surat Al-An'am, verse 19.

revealed and in Your Prophet (Muhammad) whom You have sent."¹

Look at this example of attaining the Pleasure of Allah, and the last words of this supplication where he ﷺ declared his belief in himself and the Book he was sent with.

This requires – as we have mentioned earlier – strong will and perseverance.

It is also a confirmation, from the propagator of Islam, that he was the first to convey the obligations of its message, the first to fulfill the demands of his mission, the first to obey the Commands of Allah, executing His Judgment, establishing His Divine Ordinance, and instructing all the necessary rituals

Ibn 'Abbas ؓ said: "Whenever the Prophet offered night prayers (Tahajjud), he used to say:

'O Allah! All Praise is for You; You are the Light of the Heavens and the Earth. And all Praise is for You; You are the Keeper of the Heavens and the Earth. All Praise is for You; You are the Lord of the Heavens and the Earth and whatever is therein. You are the Truth, and Your Promise is the Truth, and Your Speech is the Truth, and meeting You is the Truth, and Paradise is the Truth and Hell (Fire) is the Truth and all the prophets are the Truth and the Hour is the Truth. O Allah! I surrender to You, and believe in You, and depend upon You, and repent to You, and in Your Cause I fight and with Your

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari, on the authority of Al-Bara bin Azib ؓ.

*Orders I rule. So please forgive my past and future sins and those sins which I did in secret or in public. It is You Whom I worship, None has the right to be worshipped except You'*¹.

It was natural that the beholder of this Message would live, all his life, free from any deficiency or reproach.

Any great leader would have suffered a fall, but there is a category of people who were above any fall; those are the good, chosen people among the Servants of Allah. For, in the high illuminated position of these pure selected people, we find great Imam (faith), guided mercy, and an infallible Prophet – i.e. Muhammad bin Abdullah ﷺ.

¹ Transmitted by Al-Bukhari.

You Get Criticised According to Your Value

The vice of envy here on earth, is as old as humanity itself.

As the characteristics of greatness gather in a person, along with gifts granted from Allah ﷻ, a person would immediately feel the envious looks of others, less fortunate, who apart from criticising one, out of envy, even hold a grudge against one and wish he should not enjoy any blessing from God, nor any success.

Originally, I thought that the paths of the great personalities, with their high standards, which distinguish their way of thinking, was the reason behind of other people's hatred towards them; but I have discovered the mistake in this assumption, because many gifted people are able to get closer to people, So they are subjected to bitter remarks and outrageous criticism.

The reason for this is that the ugly see beauty as a challenge to achieve for themselves; the unwise view cleverness in others as hostility towards them; and the losers view success in others as contempt of themselves, and so on.

Life's incidents are more turbulent that we may, at first, realise for the machinations and conspiracies of resentful

people do not end. They usually manage to achieve their devious goals by humiliating many outstanding people.

A great deal of support is necessary in order to restore self-confidence to the gifted, and encourage them to proceed on their way, without any despair or feebleness, so as to face up to all the frustrations of those who impede their work, and all the harm coming from envious and destructive critics.

Dale Carnegie said: "Many people get a sense of savage satisfaction out of denouncing those who are better educated than they are, or more successful. For example, while I was writing this chapter, I received a letter from a woman denouncing General William Booth, founder of the 'Salvation Army'. I had given a laudatory broadcast about General Booth; so this woman wrote to me, saying that General Booth had stolen eight million dollars of the money he had collected to help people. The charge, of course, was absurd. But this woman was not looking for truth she was seeking the mean-spirited gratification that she got from tearing down someone, far above her. I threw her bitter letter into the wastebasket, and thanked Almighty God that I was not married to her. This did not tell me anything at all about General Booth, but it did tell me a lot about her. Schopenhauer had said it years ago: 'Vulgar people take huge delight in the faults and follies of great men'. One hardly thinks of the president of Yale as a vulgar man; yet a former president of Yale, Timothy Dwight, apparently took huge delight in denouncing a man who was running for President of the United States – the man was Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence."

The presidency of the university is a great educational rank, and it is important for people who occupy such positions to display the highest example of nobility, not as leaders of falsehood and deviation.

The Prophet ﷺ appeared in Arabia, fourteen centuries ago. The great religious leaders in his time, from the priests and vicars, had predicted his appearance, so they decided to meet him to verify the truthfulness of his Message. The matter did not require extensive examination; those people were quite certain that they had encountered the Messenger of Allah in whom they should believe and join. However, they turned away from this truth, and preferred – out of their intentional ignorance – not to mention it:

«Those to whom We gave the Scripture (Jews and Christians) recognise him (Muhammad ﷺ) as they recognise their sons. But verily, a part of them conceal the truth while they know it»¹.

This concealment is due to their envy; there is nothing worse than a priest talking about God and religion, who, behind his appearance and religious profession, has a soul that is overwhelmed by egoism. Allah ﷻ said:

«Many of the people of the Scripture wish that they could turn you away as disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy»².

¹ Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 146.

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«Or do they in fact envy other people for the bounty Allah has granted them? We gave the family of Ibrahim the Book and the Wisdom, and We gave them an immense kingdom»¹

«What an evil thing they have sold themselves for, in rejecting what Allah has sent down, outraged that Allah should send down His Favour on whomsoever of His Servants He wills»².

It is not an easy matter to protect oneself from the gloominess of life and from the wrongdoing and envy of people; it certainly requires the Help of Allah ﷻ who has ordered to seek refuge with Him from the evil of envious or malicious people, and from all types of harm:

«Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak, from the evil of what He has created and from the evil of the darkness when it gathers, and from the evil of women who blow on knots and from the evil of an envier when he envies»³.

This seeking of refuge in Allah ﷻ is a necessity; for people who enjoy the Blessings of Allah, materially and spiritually, are most in need of the Support of Allah, in order to fulfil their vocation and show their true ability.

¹ Surat An-Nisa', verse 54.

² Surat Al-Baqarah, verse 90.

³ Surat Al-Falaq.

Even though the Messengers of Allah were unlikely to lose faith in Him ﷻ, when facing the stream of accusations from envious ones and unbelievers, they still required the Support of Allah to stand firm and steadfast with their mission:

«So be steadfast, Allah's promise is true. Do not let those who have no certainty belittle you»¹.

Allah ﷻ describes interaction of Noah ﷺ with his people:

«...and every time some nobles of his people passed by, they ridiculed him. He said: 'Though you have ridiculed us now, we will certainly ridicule you as you do us. You will soon know who will receive a punishment, which disgraces him, and will find unleashed, against himself, an everlasting punishment»².

¹ Surat Ar-Rum, verse 60.

² Surat Hud, verses 37,38.

Do Not Surrender To Unjust Criticism

I said in my book "The Morals of the Muslim", after talking about the merits of power, that, typically, when Iman (faith) is established firmly in the hearts of the (believing) Muslims, it provides them with a strength that characterises their conduct: when a Muslim talks, he sounds assured of his words; when he works, he is devoted to his work; and when he opts for something, he is very clear about his objective. As long as he is certain about the idea in his mind and the feeling in his heart, he is rarely seen undecided in his action, and is hardly shaken by the presumptuous remarks against him. Rather, he may say to those around him:

«... do as you think best; that is what I am doing. You will soon know who will receive a punishment which disgraces him and will unleash, against himself, an everlasting punishment»¹.

All this defiant tone, this independency in action, and this certainty about the truthfulness of his mission makes him a very distinguished person, in life. He associates with other people, with insight; if he considers that they are right, he cooperates with them; and if they should be wrong, he moves away and consults his own mind alone.

The Prophet ﷺ said:

¹ Surat Az-Zumur, verses 39, 40.

"Do not be people without minds of your own, saying that if others treat you well, you will treat them well, and that if they do wrong, you will do wrong; but accustom yourselves to do good, if people do good, and not to do wrong, if they do evil"¹.

The truth is that a strong willed man should leave aside the affairs of people, and use his special strength to persuade that his way should be adopted as the objective, bearing in mind that people will become a burden on him, not supporters of his cause, and that he should conceal from them, any affliction from which he may suffer; for it would be no good if he were to disclose his sorrows to them!

Our advice is not to reveal, to the masses, what is considered to be above their mental and ethical rights, because they do not control the determination of the truth, nor the definition of virtue. Instead, all aspects of the truth and virtue are to be derived from their pure sources, without any regard to those who ignore them or simply reject them, even if they are a majority. Great individuals should base their conduct upon these principles; they should not be too worried by outrageous criticism!

Dale Carnegie said: "I once interviewed Major General Smedley Butler ... old "Hell-Devil" ... the most colourful, swashbuckling of generals who ever commanded the United States Marines. He told me that when he was young, he was desperately eager to be popular, wanted to make a good impression on everyone. In those days the slightest criticism smarted and stung.

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But he confessed that thirty years in the Marines had toughened his hide. "I have been berated and insulted," he said, "and denounced as a yellow dog, a snake, and a skunk. I have been cursed by the experts. I have been called every possible combination of unprintable cuss words in the English language. Bother me? When I hear somebody cussing me now, I never turn my head to see who is talking".

People with strong sensitivity, with regards to others' remarks should free themselves from this illusion and calm their nerves; they should not be deceived by a single word of praise or criticism!

The best thing that was said to make the masses perceive ightness, are the words of Allah, in this verse:

«If you were to obey most of those on earth, they would misguide you from Allah's Way. They follow nothing but conjecture. They are only guessing»¹.

That American writer found himself compelled to submit to this truth, he said: "I discovered years ago that although I could not keep people from criticising me unjustly, I could do something infinitely more important: I could determine whether I would let the unjust condemnation disturb me".

He also said: "I realise, now, that people are not thinking about you and me or caring what is around us. They are

¹ Surat Al-An'am, verse 116.

thinking about themselves – before breakfast, after breakfast, and right on until ten minutes past midnight. They would be a thousand times more concerned about a slight headache of their own that they would about the news of your death or mine."

This is the reality of those people from whom we consider their judgment of us, and from whom we attach importance to whatever they approve or curse.

Abdullah bin Ubay – leader of the hypocrites in the early days of Islam – was extremely worried and wary of Islam, until the victory of the Muslims in the Battle of Badr, when he and his followers harried to embrace Islam, for the simple reason that "the matter was then established" after the victory!

The impact of victories in battles goes beyond the battlefields; it strongly repels all the hostilities raised by the hypocrites, inside the camp. Abraham Lincoln was so keen to win his battles; but if he should lose, despite any angels descending to find excuses for him, the masses would not have accepted the situation; he said: "If I were to try to read, much less to answer, all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for business. I do the very best I know how – the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, then what is said against me won't matter. If the end brings me out wrong, then ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference."

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It is normal that an individual takes refuge in such feelings of superiority, when he is faced with a string of

attacks from envious and resentful people, as long as the truth is on his side.

Be self-critical

Any particular important activity is balanced by its input and output, its winnings and losses; except the life of mankind; it alone proceeds in a vague manner, having no prediction for its ascension or decline.

Have most – or few – of us ever thought of recording the good and bad things we have done? We should check, from time to time, the amount of good and bad in our actions, and all the instances of gain or loss.

If we proceed rashly in our life, without having to account for our actions, then we would be freely wasting our lives, the way the foolish ones squander their money. But Allah ﷻ has assigned some mindful angels whose role is to record all our deeds:

«And the Book (one's Record) will be placed, and you will see the Mujrimun (criminals, polytheists, sinners, etc.) fearful of that which is recorded therein. They will say: 'Woe to us! What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has recorded it with numbers!' And they will find all that they did, placed before them, and your Lord treats no one with injustice»¹

¹ Surat Al-Kahf, verse 49.

Should we not be aware of this "recording", which concerns us alone?

Should we not be aware of the level of right and wrong, in our actions?

Truly, this careless, blind rush in the area of life may be seen as warning of calamity or misfortune. The Qur'an has considered it among the bestial qualities which characterize the hypocrites:

«Do they not see that they are tried once or twice every year (with different kind of calamities, disease, famine, etc)? Yet, they do not turn in repentance, nor do they learn a lesson (from it)»¹.

The scholars of education, in Islam, agree upon the necessity of being self-critical, according to the nature of Islam, following the saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

"Be self-accountable of yourselves, before you have to account for your deeds (on the Day of Judgment); weigh (and compare) your deeds before they are set to weigh against you"²; and he ﷺ also said: "A wise person is one who keeps a watch over his bodily desires and passions, and checks himself from that which is harmful and strives for that which will benefit him, after death; and a foolish person is one who subordinates himself to his cravings

¹ Surat At-Tauba, verse 126.

² Transmitted by Attirmidhi.

and desires, and expects from Allah the fulfilment of his futile desires”¹.

Ibn Al-Muqaffa’ said that a man should record his every deed; making a right hand page for his good ones, and a left hand one for his bad ones; while Dale Carnegie thought that it would help a man to record only his bad deeds, in order to avoid committing them in the future; he said: “I have a folder in my private filing cabinet marked “FTD” – short for “Foolish Things I Have Done”. I put in that folder written records of the foolish things I have been guilty of. I sometimes dictate these memos to my secretary, but sometimes they are so personal, so stupid, that I am ashamed to dictate them, so I write them out in longhand.

If I had been utterly honest with myself, I would now have a filing cabinet bursting out at the seams with these “FTD” memos.

When I get out my “FTD” folders and reread the criticisms I have written of myself, they help me deal with the toughest problem I shall ever face: the management of Dale Carnegie.

I used to blame my troubles on other people; but as I have grown older – and wiser, I hope – I have realized that I myself, in the last analysis, am to blame for almost all my misfortunes. Lots of people have discovered that, as they grow older. ‘No one but myself’ said Napoleon at St. Helena, “no one but myself can be blamed for my fall, I

¹ Transmitted by Al-Mundhiri.

have been my greatest enemy – the cause of my disastrous fate.”

During my (the author’s) early age, I used to be very critical of myself; I used to draw short programs to purify my actions from anything I disliked. I remember using a (calendar) memo to confirm the stages I went through, with regards to the mental and intellectual sides, even though I failed to proceed with it to the end.

My failure was due to the fact that I always wanted to obtain too quickly, the recommended results, while my circumstances did not permit that. I tore my memo in a moment of despair, because I checked its pages – since I used to faithfully record everything – as I did not see any development; it was similar to the file of a patient whose condition never improved, despite all the care, possible.

I now feel that I was wrong to respond to that despair, because I examined the matter in detail; expecting some particular results within a very limited time, ignoring all the difficult obstacles and circumstances that we may come across in our lives.

Dale Carnegie reported that H. P. Howell, a leader in American finance, was an artist when it came to self-appraisal and self-management. He devoted every Saturday evening to the self-examination and a review of his work and appointments during the week; then he would ask himself: ‘What mistakes did I make that time?’ ‘What did I do that was right – and in what way could I improve my performance?’

Carnegie added: "Maybe "Howell" borrowed his idea from B. Franklin. Only, Franklin did not wait until Saturday night. He gave himself a severe going-over, every night. He discovered that he had thirteen serious faults. Here are three of them: wasting time, stewing around over trifles, arguing and contradicting people. He realized that, unless he eliminated these handicaps, he was not going to get very far. So he battled with one of his shortcomings, every day for a week, and kept a record of who had won each day's sluggish match. He kept up his battle with his faults, every week, for more than two years. No wonder he became one of the most influential men this nation has produced!".

The truth is that we need a great deal of time to criticize and watch ourselves, in order to accustom ourselves to goodness and perfection, and abstain from evil and corruption.

The construction of a new house in place of a demolished one, does not take place without a good examination and analysis of the place; so what about "the construction" of the self and its future? Is it really a simple matter?

No, it is never a simple matter; therefore if you need to take a lesson from your past – and from all your life – take control of your life, keep a record of all your sins and good deeds, and criticize yourself!

Conclusion

To maintain the truth, within oneself, and control its limits, it is necessary to know (and understand) this truth, and know about other things beside it!

One may say: "Why should I know about other things as well?"

The answer is that the whole picture has to have some limits of where it ends; and beyond those drawn limits, other different facts take place; so one you could never be able to distinguish one thing unless one knew the things around it, or nearly similar to it. It was said in olden times: "Things are distinguished by their opposites".

'Umar ؓ was keen to define the meaning of Jahiliyah to people; not because its definition is part of the religion, but because the principles of Islam, and all its benefits, may only be understood if injustice and oppression, that Islam came to eliminate, have been made clear.

'Umar ؓ said: "The bonds of Islam will be wasted away gradually, if the people who rose up, in Islam, do not know about Jahiliyah!"

Therefore, it is obligatory for anyone who works in the field of Islam to study all aspects of life, and be familiar with many different human activities.

It is unwise to be narrow-minded and short sighted about all the happenings in the world, or to limit oneself to one

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particular idea only, and be content with one particular form of knowledge but not another, for all these restrictions prevent the acquisition of a good, complete Islamic knowledge, and benefit from its wide cultural heritage, in education, Fiqh (jurisprudence), and moral ethics for both individuals and groups.

Comparative studies, in my opinion, are the best means to search for and attain the truth.

I call upon the just scholars to study the results attained by moralists and philosophers, and introduce them in the study of Islam itself. By simple comparison, they will eventually discover that the world is desperately in need of Islam's guidance, and therefore, they could try to eliminate the obstacles that prevent people from reaching it.

One last word to the Islamic scholars: their limited understanding of the physical and life sciences is a great travesty committed against Islam. If they proceed in this world – with their backwardness, shortcomings and negligence, they would remain ever more away from Allah and His Prophet, and their outcome – in the Hereafter – would be even worse.

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